

THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE



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OCTOBER 1939

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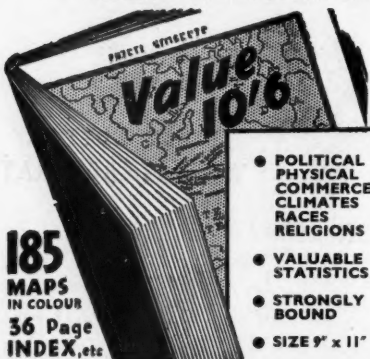
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THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

OCTOBER 1939.

MY MISSION.

BY QUEEN MARIE OF ROUMANIA.

I.

IN PARIS.

[During her lifetime Queen Marie of Roumania, daughter of T.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh (afterwards The Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha) and the Grand Duchess Marie Alexandovna, published three volumes of reminiscences under the title *The Story of My Life*, which won wide popularity. A fourth was in preparation but was unfinished at her death and has never been published. In this and the two succeeding issues will be found Her Majesty's own account of the unofficial diplomatic mission to Paris and London that, at the request of King Ferdinand, she undertook on her country's behalf in March and April, 1919.]

It was not without uneasiness that I parted from the King. I knew he was overwhelmed with difficulties ; he had efficient and devoted helpers, but his task was arduous and I was the one with whom he could most unrestrainedly discuss every question ; with me he had no need to be careful or tactful, I sometimes annoyed him, but I was safe ; difficulties did not appal me ; besides I had an unending supply of good humour ; I was fundamentally buoyant, a quality not to be despised in times of perplexity and stress ; he would be lonely without me and the children. Nevertheless he was eager to see me start upon the mission for which I had been chosen. He believed in me and thought, as others did, that I could do good work and that Roumania might profit by the popularity which had come to me during the war years.

It is not quite easy to conjure up anew this particular period of my life, nor to describe the thrilling exhilaration which carried me right into the heart of things. The challenge of my mission was so teeming with possibilities that the excitement of it was like 'wine running through my veins.' It is difficult to resist the pride and joy of being popular. I was no exception to this rule ; I liked being liked. My enormous vitality answered the call made upon it ; it was not in vain that I was born vigorous and full of health. The *joie de vivre* of my youth had been gradually transformed into a strong desire to live up to the tip-top of my potentialities, an urge not to waste an ounce of my strength whilst my country needed it. As never before I felt eager to give my best in every way, to face and overcome the most difficult problems, to stand firm in my belief in myself and humanity.

It is a grand thing to feel overwhelmingly alive, flying on the wings of enthusiasm so that others are swept along with you. I always carried joy within me, and joy is irresistible ; few have the courage to surrender to joy ; they are generally too diffident, too self-conscious, too afraid of criticism, of ridicule ; but with an impetus belonging usually only to the young, I allowed joy and confidence to take complete possession of my whole being, setting aside my doubts and even my grief. There was work to do, I felt I could do it, so I just rushed forward with my great desire to win, making no reserves, trusting to my instinct ; and the love of all things and all men shone like a light in my heart.

All this is a long time ago ; but looking back upon it from my retreat of to-day I seem to see myself standing very upright in glaring sunshine, and what is more, enjoying it to the full. I confess I am glad I was allowed to live through that time when I believed in myself and in others. It was

worth while ; it brought me into contact with interesting people ; it permitted me to use my wits, to give all my strength. The long school of suppression lay behind me, those endless years of fear when I was never allowed to discover my own capacities ; also the dreadful shadow of war lay behind me, and now for the first time I strode forth right into the glare of the world, to hold my own as best I could. Being courageous, I liked to face things squarely, to look all men in the eye, perhaps rather dangerously indifferent to strict conventionalities, but sure of my convictions, and bravely ready to confess my colours and to stick to my guns. Yes, I enjoyed it, without undue vanity nor special ambition, but as a good fighter who revels in the fray.

Finally, all the difficulties having been overcome, we started off towards Paris in a special train.

A tremendous send off at the station ; everybody had crowded together to bid us farewell and to wish us good-luck ; the government, foreign ministers and officers, diplomats, generals, eager ladies with flowers and a knowing look in their eyes because they guessed I was being sent abroad on a ' mission ' and this filled them with pleasurable excitement. I was considered a sort of ' Mascotte ' ; once more my people looked upon me as their brightest hope ; so I departed, carrying with me the country's blessing and good will.

There was no end of uniformed followers and when our frontiers were crossed a guard of French soldiers was given us under the command of Captain Perrain, an aviator who had been cited à l'ordre du jour seven times for bravery ; a very nice man with whom we made great friends.

Tired out as I was physically, the journey was a great rest. We were advancing slowly, because of the shortage of coal everywhere, and, in parts, because of inundations due to

melting snows. We never knew exactly through which country we were travelling, as the new boundaries had not yet been fixed. Everything was exciting, interesting, new and rather strange. There was a feeling of spring in the air and when we reached Fiume a French guard of honour gave us the military salute. The fruit-trees were in blossom, white and pale pink against a blue-washed sky. My heart sang within me; a beautiful blessed sight! Leaning far out of the window I inhaled the keen sea-air, my lungs expanding rapturously.

We got out of our train to be greeted by many officers including a very nice English General Scott. Accustomed through the war years to have always something to give, I had with me provisions of tobacco. My daughters and I walked down the ranks dealing out cigarettes, then still a luxury, to the smart-looking, blue-coated soldiers peering at us from under their neat little helmets; everywhere an exhilarating atmosphere of expectation and mutual good will.

During the long hours between stations and official receptions, I lay on my bed, luxuriously enjoying the unwonted rest, reading, thinking, chatting with my children, they, too, enchanted: Elisabetha full of excited anticipation of all that lay before us, and my precious Mignon always my most faithful worshipper, ready to admire and rejoice over my every success. Modest and unselfish she lived for others and I was her god. Ileana who knew so little about travelling would nestle up against me looking at me expectantly with her enormous blue eyes.

Before Paris the well-known writer of so many charming and witty books, Collette Willy, boarded our train to interview me. In her hands she held a bouquet of gorgeous orchids! Their exotic beauty burst on me like a revelation.

They were a sort of symbol, a token that the war was over, that there were places where such pleasant things as hot-houses still existed ; places of luxury and leisure. After the long dearth of the war years, these delicate orchids were something of a miracle.

I liked Collette Willy ; she was a wonderful conversationalist ; her language was eloquent, her words full of subtle homage and praise. She seemed a herald of good luck.

Then at last our train ran into the Paris station, punctually at eight forty-five, but here I must quote directly from my diary :

Paris, Wednesday, March 5th, 1919.

Paris ! yes we actually reached Paris, to-day so to say, the centre of the world. I can hardly believe that we are really here !

Unaccustomed to rapid trains we all felt somewhat bewildered and tremendously shaken about. I was given an unforeseen reception ; although I am not here officially, there was a dense and confusing crowd. All my Roumanians were there of course ; besides endless French dignitaries, generals, officers, many personal friends and such profusion of flowers that I did not know how to cope with them. The public cheered and the photographers persecuted me like a swarm of mosquitos.

Faces, faces, and flowers in such gorgeous masses that I was almost buried beneath them and everybody talking, chattering, each man wanting to tell me his news, to impart his special information, each, according to his or her personal point of view. When we reached the Hotel the rush continued and lasted without any interruption, except for a few hours in the night. Conversations were carried on

while the door was continually opening and ever more flowers were brought, whole woods of lilacs, roses, callas, orchids, irises, daffodils, freezias, violets, as though to make up for the several years flower-fast. My suite has become a real flower-show, I can hardly turn round. I am beautifully installed in the state apartments of the Ritz. Everybody fusses about me ; I am treated as a sort of heroine and must try to fit into this unexpected part which is thrust upon me. All the journalists of the globe seem to be circling round me ; they buzz like swarms of bees, waylay me, dogging my every step. It is a modern conception of things I am unaccustomed to ; everything has become so different, I smilingly pass through the rush, noise, confusion, doing my best to remain calm and not to lose my head.

Everything and everybody presses in upon me at once. Brătianu came for a long talk to give me a picture of the political situation, to explain whom I must see, how I must treat everyone, in which way I can be helpful. But goodness ! it is confusing ; everything rushed in upon me at once before I had even been able to take off my hat or wash my hands.

Old friends keep pouring in, doctors and officers who had been in Roumania, their faces all beaming with welcome ; then there are all those I met in 1913 when I was for the first time in Paris : artists, authors, dukes, marquises, pre-war acquaintances, once people with leisure and what not else, and at all moments, in every corner, hungrily expectant journalists, ever on the look out to catch me. A nightmare !

I am interviewed, photographed, pressed, honoured, invited here, there, everywhere and all this, so to speak 'unofficially.'

The atmosphere, so I am told, is not favourable to Roumania, but is certainly favourable to me. If they only do not

suffocate me with their attentions, and if I can make use of my evident popularity to help my country, then all will be well. I will not say that it is disagreeable to be made such fuss of, but it is overwhelming and especially one day is not long enough, and one head and brain do not suffice for all that is offered me. Besides I am so far from home, communication is slow and difficult, and I've left many who depend upon me, for whom my departure means a blank. No one must be forgotten; also I must get into touch with Nicky at Eton . . . I can hardly believe I am so near my Nicky-boy!

After lunch with Elise Brătianu and the Antonescus (our minister here), I tried to get off for a walk in company of my daughters who were stamping with impatience to see Paris. They were waiting for me. I was unable to escape, delayed by Antonescu who had in turned tried to initiate me into all the work I am expected to do. Finally we got off and we trotted down the Rue de la Paix. We were so terribly mobbed that we had to take our motor and drive to another street where we could walk and shop with more ease.

I bought a beautiful book for Nando, also one for Carol. The shops were entrancing. Unaccustomed to see such a magnificent display of goods, we acted like country bumpkins.

Strolling and shopping were not easy. Wherever we went the public ran after me, in the streets, in the shops; the *vendeuses* pursued me and flowers were continually pressed into my hands. The weather was beautiful; I was much too hot in my coat and had to take it off. We met two amiable officers who volunteered to carry it back for me to the hotel; Elizabetha and Mignon were delighted.

We returned to the Ritz for tea. Henriette Vendôme,

elder sister of King Albert I of Belgium, and her husband came to greet me ; such a lot to tell each other, so much sadness also. Nando's younger brother, Carlo, had just succumbed to the Spanish 'flu. Poor Josephine is now a widow ; their castle on the Rhine she and her husband were so proud of is in the territory occupied at present by the British ! A confusing state of things. But I was so pleased to see Henriette.

At six a big reception of the Roumanian colony, and till bed-time a steady flow of people coming to see me : French, English, Americans, Russians, endless war-acquaintances, exclamations of joy, talk, talk, talk . . . oh ! dear, my poor head ! And this is only the beginning, to-morrow it will be worse.

Paris, Thursday, March 6th, 1919.

I shall never be able to describe the rush and excitement I am living in. What ought to be done in two months is being crushed into a few short, hurried days. I had foreseen something of the kind, but was not prepared for this ! I cannot defend myself against the flood ; I must just cope with it as best I can and call upon my unflinching energy and power of resistance to give me courage and insight. But it needs patience to see everybody, listen to everybody, answer everybody. Besides my wardrobe is in an awful state, my dresses are five years old and almost comic in this centre of fashion. But how find time to see dress-makers, choose hats, cloaks, shoes, linen and stockings, if I am called to interview ministers and politicians from eight o'clock onwards ? Then there is Ballif, Simky and Irène my ladies, my children and into the bargain I am without my personal attendants ; my maids being Germans were not allowed to accompany me, so I am served by Madame Pantazi (my hat-

maker) and her daughter ; they are ardently devoted, but do not know the every day routine. This complicates matters and makes dressing and getting ready in a hurry very difficult. My room is overrun by dress-makers, hat-makers, shoe-makers who fill it with card-board boxes. They are as bad as the reporters and photographers ! They press and tempt me and try to persuade me that I need everything they want to sell. And I do not like the fashions. Horrid short skimpy dresses, tight, sleeveless and the evening gowns are as nearly naked as possible, made of separate pieces of stuff which hardly hold together, leaving arms and back completely bare, if possible also the legs. Preposterous frocks for a queen, to which I will not submit for all the coercing of the *grands couturiers*, who try to make me feel small and out of the run. But I remain firm and will not be rushed into ordering things unsuitable for my age, size and dignity. But all this takes time and I am never left a moment's breathing space. And yet I crave to see something of Paris, to be occasionally allowed a single little hour when I can do what I want, not only what *others* want.

This day seems to have been chiefly sacrificed to the Press. My advisers insisted that I must receive them, so I submitted. All the journalists of the universe seem to crop up like swarms of fleas. Just imagine a door opening upon forty real live newspapermen and I thrust into their midst as into a cage, all forty hanging over me, asking every imaginable sort of question. I did my top best, looked them straight in the eye and spoke up bravely for my country. But now, even in sleep, they continue to haunt me. First came the French, English, Italians, Americans, and when I thought I was done with them, it all began again in a big room downstairs. There were even Poles and Japanese and

what not else. . . . I only hope I really kept my wits about me and that my French was not too English.

Besides the Press, I had a big reception for all manner of people, old friends and new acquaintances. One tumbles in Paris upon all sorts of unexpected people like quaint old General Verblunsky with whom I had worked at Jassy, and Jack Chamberlain, an American boy I had known years ago in Roumania. But all the same I did get out for a short hour and bought Ilcana a watch she was longing to possess. 'Oh! Mama I did see such a lovely little watch in town!' Paris of course being the town. So I had to find that special watch.

I also saw Countess Anna de Noailles, the celebrated French poetess, Roumanian by birth, and enjoyed her beyond words, and thus it went on all day without a pause. Flowers kept pouring in in stupendous masses. Even when I was in bed, people still came with questions which needed answering. It is certainly hard work, but I must carry it through. To-morrow I am to see the great Clemenceau.

Paris, Friday, March 7th, 1919.

A lovely sunny day, but I am not even allowed to take my bath and dress in peace. Each person wants to be the first to get at me in the morning. The whole of Paris rushes into my room. Even the porter seems to have his or her protégée from whom I am expected to buy something. But I am firm when it comes to lavishly spending money upon myself, when my country is still suffering. I have quite lost the habit of gorgeous attire, so I can look upon all the treasures being endlessly dangled before my eyes, without envy or temptation. The truth is I have so entirely become 'the first servant of my country,' that it

entirely dominates me ; all vanities of yore have for the moment been set aside for a sterner reality. But the atmosphere of Paris is so saturated with 'fashion,' that it is a regular struggle to stick to my ideas as my ladies, my maids, and all those around me, have succumbed to the Paris craze for clothes.

But how I am being flattered ! I am simply being lifted up to the skies. It is lucky I am forty-three or I might really imagine I am 'irresistible' ; yet I begin to realize the degree of natural magnetism I exercise upon people, independent of age, especially as none like the French know how to appreciate a woman.

Having with the usual difficulty struggled into my clothes, I found Brătianu and Mișu anxiously waiting for me in my *salon*, as to-day I am to encounter the 'Tigre.' Brătianu, who was evidently somewhat nervous, was lengthy in speech and my head ached. But I patiently absorbed all the wisdom with which my two statesmen felt they must fill me and promised to do my best with the formidable old gentleman. Whilst we were talking, Victor Antonescu rushed in, full of excitement, overjoyed at the way the Press commented upon my interviews of yesterday.

He has the pleasurable feeling and impression that he has something to do with my success and I am only too delighted that he should have his share ; he is so eager, and loves his country so . . . As to his wife, my little Lise or 'Madame Butterfly' as I call her, she is an angel. I am glad the Press is nice about me for the sake of Roumania. All honour shown me is shown to my country ; so if Paris goes off its head a bit about me, all the better ; it opens the way for the work I have to do.

Confident in the justice of my cause I went to the Quai d'Orsai for my interview with Clemenceau. Paris was

full of golden sunshine and I was full of hope that I would perhaps be able to tame the 'Tigre.' Antonescu, Ballif, and Simky accompanied me. I was received with military honours, and our national anthem was played beautifully, like a solemn hymn. The old gentleman came running down the stairs to meet me as though he were quite a young man. What struck me as queer was that he wore gloves. We went upstairs together, followed by numerous officers, then he took me into his bureau alone, for a tête-à-tête talk.

I always imagined I would like Clemenceau, and I did. He looks the old man he is, but otherwise there is nothing old about him, and not the smallest little corner of his brain is old or stiff. He has the directness of a soldier, but he is decidedly stubborn. He has certain grievances against Roumania to which he sticks like a leech, and at certain moments we glared at each other like two fighters; I quite enjoyed it, but he certainly had no intention to be convinced. He attacked me *de front* about Roumania.

—'Vous avez traité avec les Boches, en 1918, avant l'Armistice.'

—'Yes, but we were encircled by our enemy and our Allies as well, who went Bolsheviks. We were tracked like game.'

He looked me ferociously in the eye: 'Ne me racontez pas ces histoires là, vous étiez pour la résistance, vous!' This was a knock-out.

—'Yes,' I bravely confessed, 'but being a woman I had a passionate *point de vue*, and being at that time so near to events, I had no *recul* from which to see the situation as a whole. I believed in the allied victory; so I was ready to hang on by the skin of my teeth, but if this was wise, is for the others to judge. However, now I have not come

to speak about myself but to modify your attitude towards Roumania and this I mean to fight now as I have fought my battles during our tragic war years.'

I cannot say how far I convinced him, but I know I did not bore him, because when once I half rose to leave, so as not to steal his precious time, he impatiently waved me back to my seat: 'I have plenty of time for you; you do not whine; you, as some do, you speak up, I like that.' We touched upon the delicate subject of frontiers. Clemenceau knitted his thick eyebrows, bit his lip: 'You think Roumania's revendications are just. Others have equal claims. The Serbians, for instance, who fought so valiantly at Monastir, want part of the Banat, inhabited by them, and they are supported by the English.'

—'Yes, but the English point of view is much more detached. I do not think they understand much about our small countries, nor that they are very well up in the geography of the Balkans. We want the whole Banat in order to have the Danube as our natural boundary.'

—'Quoi! Votre Majesté désire tout le Banat jusqu'à la Tisza, mais c'est la part du lion.'

—'This is just why I came to see his first cousin, the Tiger,' and we both laughed a hearty laughter. If I touched his passionate old heart or not, that I cannot know, but my face brought him a pleasanter picture of Roumania, my smile was more convincing than tiresome political debates. The feeling I had that he liked me was confirmed by what he afterwards said to Antonescu: 'Une reine telle que la vôtre, on ne peut la recevoir qu'avec honneurs militaires, le Maréchal Foch en tête!'

I left to the sound of the Marseillaise, the air filled with golden dust.

For luncheon I had the English Ambassador, Lord Derby

and his wife, the Brătianu and Mișu. Lord Derby is a delightful gentleman. Brătianu was very excited to know how I had got on with the 'Tigre' who does not like him, declaring that Brătianu has a 'lamenting voice' . . . 'et je n'aime pas ça.'

After luncheon, endless audiences and a surprise visit from Sandro, Xenia's¹ husband. We talked about Russia's awful disaster. Then Eulalie of Spain, mother-in-law of sister Beatrice, appeared, looking incredibly young, full of talk, very funny, but hardly a good word for anybody; her eye is watchful and she has no love for her neighbour.

Particularly warm was my meeting with Albert Thomas, who asked to see me. In his joy '*du revoir*' he almost embraced me, remembering every detail of his visit to Roumania during the War. He talked and laughed, and laughed and talked and was altogether too delightful. He declared: 'I love Roumania and will stick up for her with all my might, and I approve of Your Majesty's unofficial visit. It is the *right* way to come. The "*peuple*" can enjoy you more. Your Majesty must go about amongst them as much as possible, to get the human touch. Paris is so delighted to see Your Majesty's radiant smile.' He was in bursting good humour '*et rigolait tout le temps*' and perspired as freely in the cold season as in the warm; it seems to be one of his peculiarities. I think it is because he talks so much and about so many subjects at once.

St. Aulaire, the French Minister to Roumania during the war, came afterwards, severely aristocratic, the extreme opposite of Albert Thomas. He too has remained our warm friend and bravely defends us. Having lived through all our tragedy with us, his word has weight.

But this did not end my activities; I still had to go to

¹ Tsar Nicolas's eldest sister.

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a reception given by Brătianu for many interesting people. I saw numerous friends and had a long talk with Michel Paléologue, former French ambassador at Petersburg, who is most interesting. There I also found the Ruspoli, the Italian ambassador at Paris, old friends who had been in Bucharest, Leo Kennedy, correspondent of the *Times*, son of Sir John Kennedy, formerly British Minister to Roumania, Baron Beyens, Belgian Minister to France and formerly at Bucharest, and Nicholai, a French aristocrat, who had fought on our front and remained ever since a great friend.

There is neither place nor time to enumerate everybody I saw, but I must still mention General Thompson, Madame de Ganney, and above all Countess Anna de Noailles who was making my daughters laugh in a corner of the salon, her very short dress pulled right up over her knees; her flow of talk equal to Albert Thomas's, though in quite another style!

I still had to go to the opera. I dressed all in white, but I have no jewels.¹ The Bolsheviks have got them all. Although my dress had nothing to do with the fashion of the day, I did my best to do honour to the reception given me. Our national anthem was played with special fervour, in spite of the only semi-official character of the affair. They have a particular way of playing the '*Traiasca Regele*,' which makes it very beautiful. The house was three-quarters full of American uniforms. Endless people came into our box during the *entre-actes*; there was an atmosphere of tense emotion; my daughters were enjoying themselves, this being a most exciting time for them.

¹ Both my jewels and the legal tender of the country to the amount of 7,000,000 gold francs were sent, together with many artistic treasures, by the National Bank of Roumania to Moscow and were never returned.

After all this, bed was not unwelcome, but astonishing as it may sound, I was not really tired.

.

The ten days I spent in Paris were as breathlessly over-filled as the two cited from my diary. In fact the pace increased; it was all I could do to hold my ground and meet every demand. It was all *too* much, but just had to be stood. It was probably my enthusiasm which carried me through and also that immense desire to serve my country to the utmost. When asked why I had come to Paris I answered: 'To give Roumania a face, she needs a face, so I have come to give her mine.' And this I succeeded in doing. At that hour *I* was Roumania, I say so proudly *I* because I feel I have a right to say it. There are a few still living who were my collaborators at that time to confirm this statement, but if those could rise from their graves they would not say me nay.

The immense sympathy shown me everywhere, my ever-growing popularity carried me like on the crest of a wave, and the exhilaration was such that I seemed to feel no fatigue. When tried to the verge of desperation my sense of humour was always there to smooth down any irritation.

Probably I shall be criticised for thus speaking about my own self, but it would not be my true story if I did not tell things as they were.

My days began regularly with a visit from Brătianu and Antonescu, and often also Mișu. They would appear punctually at nine so as to coach me for my day's work. I devoutly listened to their wise exhortations, but with each passing day their faith in me grew. They understood that I had better be given a loose rein. I did not always strictly obey their advice; I had my own ways and means which were often more efficacious than theirs, if somewhat less

conventional. It was a case of 'rushing in to win.' My anxious gentlemen began to feel as though they had placed their money on a winning horse, so by degrees they eased off, encouraging me to go my own way, my own pace . . .

On the day following my interview with Clemenceau I was quasi-officially received at the Elysée, a whole battalion several thick was lined up all round the inner square ; I was being received like a king. Before leaving an honour was done me, never yet done to a queen : I was asked to review the troops. This is just the sort of thing I can do in best style without any embarrassment, so I marched down the ranks, looking the soldiers straight in the eye, whilst the most invigorating salute was played upon gay-toned bugles of which I love the sound. My Roumanians wept with joy and my own heart was beating with quite justifiable pride. My people understood that this was a special tribute paid to the woman who had so staunchly upheld their country's honour.

It was the first time I had been at the Elysée. Poincaré received me most graciously ; he was a friend of Roumania, but had no great ease of manner. I felt there was an underlying shyness about him which seemed to tie him up. His speech was abrupt and a little dry, but he was ready to discuss with me things concerning my country.

As to Madame Poincaré, perhaps she also was shy, but she certainly lacked the usual French amiability ; she wore an entrancing little orange velvet cape which satisfied my colour-loving eye. On my left sat M. Pichon, Minister of foreign affairs, a talkative and friendly gentleman. Conversation ran generally upon the same burning subjects.

A most select company sat round the exquisitely laid table ; we ate wonderful food on old china in a perfect setting and after the meal was over I was able to talk to

several pleasant interesting people, such as Maréchal Foch, the celebrated painter Bonnat and others.

That same afternoon there was a solemn 'séance' at the 'Académie des Beaux Arts,' where I was admitted to membership as the only woman, amidst the most select company of very old and learned gentlemen. This, too, was a very special honour. I felt deeply flattered; however, not being a blue stocking but only a normal *intellectuelle*, I felt somewhat bewildered about all the fuss they made about my talents . . . I was not entirely convinced that I deserved these conspicuous honours, whilst I had accepted the military tribute paid to me without a blush.

I was pompously ushered to a chair in the celebrated old room of 'l'Institut' and had to listen to a very flattering speech of welcome by M. Charles Vidor, the President of the Académie, to which I answered in a few simple, unprepared words. When deeply moved I can luckily always express myself, only emotion generally makes my English accent more conspicuous. Anyhow my illustrious old colleagues and '*confrères*' were more than enchanted with me and we said extraordinarily sweet things to each other. Then I and my daughters were conducted to a second building where we listened to some supremely exquisite music and conversed with innumerable elderly gentlemen with famous names well known over the world, among whom Henri Bergson the great philosopher and François Fleming.

Each day was a greater rush than the one preceding and those who came to see me were as a river in flood. A dozen languages were talked at my table; voices, voices, voices . . . I was eternally switching off my mind from one question to another; the press, hurry, rush, diversity

of it all was enough to loosen the screws of brains better trained than mine.

Closing my eyes I pass in review many of those who came to me then : Briand, Deschanel, president of the Chamber of Deputies, Jules Cambon, Dubox, president of the Senate, Michel Paléologue, Colonel House, Hoover, Davidson, head of the American Red Cross, Venizelos and many others.

Briand was a great friend of Roumania ; he was helpful to Brătianu and lent a patient ear to our needs. Deschanel was polite, elegant and especially attentive, his language, even for a Frenchman, was beautifully laden with delicately flattering words. Colonel House at that moment was representing President Wilson during his absence in England, I think, and Belgium. Our interview was short and I had no time to become better acquainted. For Mr. Davidson I felt immediate sympathy, and spontaneously, then and there, he became my friend and helper.

Mr. Venizelos, then a much-boomed favourite, was well to the fore ; wisdom was supposed to flow from his ready tongue and even the Great Powers were inclined to lend him an ear. Very sure of his own charm, his voice was soft, his manner ingratiating, his smile was as the smile of a professional beauty who had a place to gain in the world . . . one felt he was out to seduce. . . .

Mr. Hoover was his direct opposite ; he had no desire to charm ! Spare of words, dry, reserved, a little frowning, his attitude was not particularly congenial, but my old Colonel Boyle, who had worked for some time with him in Belgium, held him in high esteem and made me promise to see him as he was sure Mr. Hoover could, if he wanted, be of great help to my country ; so we met and talked earnestly as I had heard of his great competence, and I had a great and just cause for which to plead.

Mr. Hoover had no sentimentality about the countries he was helping and had no special sympathy for Roumania and her queen ; but as his magnificently organised units were spreading over many distressed areas, his feeling of equity made him extend his work also amongst our poor and starving population ; for this I shall be everlastingly grateful. Later, during our campaign against the Bolsheviks in Hungary, he took side against us, a difference of opinion which led to an exchange of letters in which we agreed to disagree !

At that time all conversations were weighty, important, charged with interest, full of possibilities, hopes and fears ; some even were like skimming over thin ice. I was sailing ahead, bravely fighting for my country's interests, with an immense desire that our side of the question should be understood. Patriotic ardour made me doubt of nothing and no one ; my convictions were so strong that every courage was mine. I never paused to consider how others might judge or criticise or even ridicule my attitude ; and Roumania believed in her envoy.

There was still enthusiasm in the air, a show of fraternity, of mutual goodwill ; outstretched hands still desired to be generous, some still believed in the friendship they offered . . . and around a large green table, important gentlemen were piecing together a new Europe, and talking of justice and peace. . . .

It was at a luncheon given to me by Mr. Balfour that I met Mr. Lloyd George. We were a small party including Lord and Lady Derby, Lord Robert Cecil and a few others, so conversation at table was general and flowed pleasantly, touching upon many varied subjects. Mr. Lloyd George loved talking, company stimulated him ; he was full of

fun and wit; thoroughly enjoying his own jokes. I let myself be carried away by his undeniable charm, all in wondering how much he really understood about Europe, outside the British Empire. I never dared forget, however pleasant their company might be, that these important gentlemen were concocting a new world, and like the mother of a very large, and exceedingly distressed family, I wondered if they would understand, or even be interested, in my country's needs. I had to gather all my wits about me to be continually on the alert, ready, at the right moment to slip in a word here and there which allowed me, unostentatiously, to lead up to my own subject. This was a pleasant luncheon-party, not a political meeting and must not be rendered uncongenial with heavy talk.

My conversation had to run along and fit in with theirs, but occasionally, all in amusing them with some quaint anecdote, lightly told, I could catch their interest and lead the conversation over towards those things nearest my heart. It was no easy task and needed much tact. Brătianu had warned me that Mr. Balfour was not very kindly inclined towards Roumania, and being so very suave and charming, combined with a certain absent-mindedness, it was not easy to discover a chink in his armour.

I realised but too well that, these busy, big men could hardly be expected to understand the intricate hopes, desires, ambitions, prejudices, feuds or even the geography of that group of small countries 'in the Near East.' Roumania, Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria, Turkey, we were all classed together in their minds as 'troublesome little states always too ready to flare up and become a nuisance at inconvenient moments.' But during the great war, we had done our share, some of us had been useful, if only to play off one against the other; we had suddenly come to the front and

could no more be totally ignored, and patiently or otherwise, we had to be given a hearing.

Having myself been born in a 'Great Country,' I could but all too well comprehend their attitude; through long years of uneasy learning, I had also come to understand the mentality of the 'small' nations, and was to-day even the defender of one of these. The situation was not without humour, and I smiled inwardly, all in retaining the concentration of mind expected of me. I sat there amongst them, letting all Brătianu's pressing instructions filter through my brain: 'We have more right to Transylvania than the Hungarians because of our prior claims to the land, historically and ethnographically proved, because of the majority of the population being Roumanian, because of the promise of the Allies as an inducement to enter the war.'—'Would I remember all this!'—'Yes, Your Majesty, and still more: Your Majesty knows of our rights to Bessarabia, the personal feudal estate of Neagoe Besarab . . . The Russians took the Northern part of it at the Treaty of Paris in 1812 and the Lower part at the Treaty of Berlin in 1878. It is only a recent occupation, due to the imperialistic tendencies of the nineteenth century. But despite its rapid russification sixty per cent of the Bessarabian still speak Moldavian . . .'

In spite of my ardent Roumanian patriotism, there was a second 'me,' which had nothing to do with my mission, which was thoroughly amused. I had an uncomfortably clear perception of how indifferent my hosts and table companions really were to the anxious hopes of 'those Balkan' countries, which is certainly the name they gave us when we were not in the room! I almost *felt* their thoughts and surmised something of their irritation and impatience when our rights and revendications came under discussion.

In their pleasant, easy company, where I felt so at home, I was dangerously tempted to take a rest from 'patriotism' and allow what I like to call 'my all-round brain' to have full sway and to discuss with them 'beyond the limits of frontiers and nationalities.' I could so easily, with the purely 'thinking' part of myself, slip over into their attitude, familiar to me by birth. It was like floating comfortably along with the tide, but I also was conscious that a task had been set before them, beyond the competence of even the cleverest brain. We, small countries, were but pawns in their great game, but we were living pawns; we too had our pride, our aspirations, our hopes, our rights, our sufferings, and to-day fate had placed me amongst the 'small.' Their cause was mine, so I must shut away all temptation to understand too well their side of the question. To walk in the middle of the road could not be indulged in, unless everybody was ready to do the same! and no one was willing to compromise.

Sometimes we must put on blinkers, we have not yet reached the happy stage when we are able to stand *au delà de la mêlée*.

Before leaving for London I wished to carry the beautiful flowers brought to me in such wasteful quantities to the graves on the battlefields. So under the guidance of a French officer, Colonel Nodet, I set off for the whole day, accompanied by my dear, patient Mignon, Ballif, our Minister Mr. Victor Antonescu and our military attaché. The impression received of what I saw is best quoted from my diary:

'A strenuous day visiting by motor the French battlefields, the churchyards, the devastated towns and villages, a pitiable and terrible sight. We went to Noyon, passing by

Coucy, Château le Chauny, Antreville, coming back by Lassigny, Montdidier. No word can adequately describe what cruel desolation we have seen ; we seemed to be wandering through some unimaginable terrible dream. Nothing has remained standing ; all is ruin. The towns and villages have been entirely destroyed ; they are a thing of the past. Can they ever be brought to life again ? Can they ever rise again out of those heaps of stone, mortar and brick. The land spreading around is a vast waste from out of which the spectres of decapitated, lacerated, charred trees stand like sickening apparitions, belonging to nothing which has any name upon earth. And everywhere the ground is torn to pieces by large round cavities filled with water. Out of this horror-stricken chaos, dead villages with their skeleton churches rise like expiring martyrs crying out their agony to the indifferent heavens. It is terrible . . . "c'est l'irréparable."

'The castle of Coucy was perhaps of all the most heart-breaking sight. It is said this was destroyed purposely. It was one of the most celebratedly beautiful castles, dating from the Middle Ages, with its tremendous basements and prodigious towers. It has not even a silhouette left, is not even a beautiful ruin ; it simply has no more face !

'Destruction, utter, complete, irretrievable. A monstrous event has passed over these regions, an event that decades, perhaps centuries cannot repair. Along all the roads row upon row of fruit-trees have been brutally cut down so that they never again can bloom or burst into leaf. Dead, everything dead, and graves everywhere, poor, humble little crosses like those I have seen by the hundred in the hills and plains of Roumania.

'We drove for twelve whole hours and lunched in a still-standing corner of a ruined house in Noyon, where literally

not a single building remains whole. We climbed about the ruins, talking to a few stray inhabitants who had crept back to what was once their homes. We visited the skeleton cathedral of which the gaunt remains look sadly down upon that which once was a flourishing little town.

'Wherever I saw graves I covered them with roses, lilacs, carnations, violets, orchids and mimosa, all the blooming treasures brought to me by great and small. To-day my vases are empty.'

On my return I was asked to receive General Pénélou who, in the name of the President, brought me the 'Grand Cordon de la Légion d'Honneur.'

The following day I drove to the Elysée to thank M. Poincaré for the honour done me. We had a long talk and he was most pleasant and very kindly inclined towards our country. He told me: 'Clemenceau has much changed towards Roumania since Your Majesty has given a face to Her Country.'

I did not know how much I had been able to achieve; but of one thing I was pleasantly aware; that I had created another atmosphere for Roumania, and this, especially, had been my mission. Yet I obtained also some material advantages, very valuable to our Country, such as the hundred engines for which I had pleaded so insistently. This success exaggeratingly interpreted gave vent to the American press to coin for me the epithet of 'the Business Queen of the Balkans.' My sense of humour accepted this new title with amusement, as it reassured me that I had certainly done my best, straining every nerve, every faculty, to be worthy of the confidence my country had placed in me.

[The November issue will contain Queen Marie's account of her visit to King George V and Queen Mary at Buckingham Palace.]

HIMALAYAN HALF-WIT.

*I heard him first on a mountain track
 Where I lay till dawn, for the night was black,
 And I thought that Pan had called me back
 To days when the hills were new.
 And with shambling gait he came at dawn
 With eyes of brown, like a startled fawn,
 And led me up in the misty morn
 Through the sun and the golden dew.*

*A wooden pipe in a minor key,
 With a bag of atta, some ghoor and ghi,
 Tobacco dust and a pinch of tea
 Was the only wealth he had ;
 He had no tongue, so he spoke no word,
 His back was hunched and his brain was blurred,
 But his pipe could summon beast and bird,
 And the village called him mad.*

*We reached the village beneath the crest
 Of a steep hillside, like a swallow's nest,
 Where I called a halt, I needed rest,
 But my guide he gripped my hand,
 And he urged me on with looks of fear
 At the crowd who came and who stood to jeer,
 Till we saw the fat headman appear,
 Who silenced the noisy band.*

*The headman came and he made salaam,
And he took my guide by his withered arm,
And smiled as he said, 'He means no harm,*

*It's only his foolish way !
His mother, mauled by a bear when she
Was gathering herbs by that patch of scree
High up on that slope which you can see,
Died there ; he was born that day.*

*' And ev'ry year in this month of May
When the sun has melted the drifts away
From that foul spot where his mother lay,*

*He begs us to go up there !
But we know the woman's spirit hides
In the rocks and trees, on the shaley slides,
You have to follow wherever she glides,
So, Sahib, we do not dare.'*

*I looked at the man, the butt of all,
With his fawn-brown eyes, and I felt the call
Of his tongueless mouth, his mystic thrall,*

*I said, ' I will go at noon ;
There is no ghost where his mother died,
No beckoning wraith on the shaley slide,
In the rocks and shrubs no spirits hide
By daylight or dark or moon ! '*

*We left the place when the sun was high,
And they watched us go, just he and I,
I could read the thought in every eye,*

*' There goes a fool and a fool.'
We turned our eyes from that smirking crew,
To the ridge above where a white cloud grew,
A lovely shape in the azure blue,
A swan on an azure pool.*

He took my rifle, he took my flask,
I saw in his eyes that I could not ask
A thing too great, too mean a task
That he would not do for me.

And though he was twisted wry and small
He steadied my feet so I could not fall
As we climbed the slipping shaley wall
Which hung o'er the headlong scree.

He made a sign when we passed the spot
Where he took up life and his sorry lot,
But he still pushed on, so that was not
The place that he wished to show.
Over the top of the hill we went,
And my breath was gone and my body spent
When he stopped at gaze, bent body bent,
As he pointed down below.

The hill it fell in a golden sheet
Of yellow tulips beneath our feet,
Acre on acre of golden heat
In rays of the setting sun ;
Below a shadowy valley lay,
Where the softest curtain of blue and grey
In close pursuit of the golden ray
Crept up as the day was done.

Again he signed to that line of light
Where day was fleeing before the night,
Where every flower was closing tight
At touch of the dark'ning sky,
But finger on voiceless mouth inferred
That I should be silent, and then I heard
A whisper like feathers gently stirred,
A million petals sigh.

*A wooden pipe in a minor key,
With a bag of atta, some ghoor and ghi,
Tobacco dust and a pinch of tea
Was the only wealth he had,
But what matters wealth when you have trod
In the golden path of the Peace of God,
On hills where the yellow tulips nod,
And the whole world calls you mad?*

J. D. SCALE.

THE CENTAURS.

*Once in my youth I saw the centaurs drinking
Up where the pines are fur on the mountain's flank.
They stood to their girths in the hazel-coloured water;
Fearless, they drank.*

*Under their glossy sides the water rippled
In widening rings of amber and gold.
Their eyes
Were golden with rings of jet; and, tawny-amber,
I saw the antique crests from their man-necks rise.*

*Under the pines and the thin, sun-dappled birches
They stooped, and drank with lips that were dark and thick.
Beneath my hesitant foot a dry branch crackled . . .
Furred ears a-prick,*

*Startled, they whinnied, their gold eyes rolling in fury ;
The water churned topaz and crystal between their knees !
Crashing, they gained the bank and the ferny thickets,
They vanished amid the trees.*

*Then I said, When I am tall, when I am older,
I will come again upon centaurs.
One I will chase
And catch and bind for my own, whip, saddle and halter,
To go at my pace !*

*But never again have I seen the proud, shy creatures—
No mark of a hoof in the turf, nor a crested head.
None of those whom I ask have heard that thunderous passing ;
The woods and the heights are bare,
The centaurs have fled.*

LEAH BODINE DRAKE.

Kentucky.

MISS MOON AND VIRGINIA.

BY MARY LUTYENS.

ON the Sunday, Miss Moon was taken over by Mrs. Collingham to lunch at a big house in the neighbourhood. When they got there, their hostess, Lady Charters, had not come back yet from playing golf with some of her week-end guests, and the rest of the party were lying out on coloured mattresses by the side of the swimming pool. They were all very young people and they could not think who on earth these middle-aged disturbers of their peace could be, but one young man with fair tousled hair got up and said, 'How d'you do? Lily isn't back yet from golf. Would you like a drink? Sherry? Gin and lime?' Mrs. Collingham and Miss Moon each took a small glass of sherry. The young man agreed with them what a perfect day it was and how inviting the pool looked, which indeed it didn't because it was covered on top with green slime. The other young people, who, now Miss Moon looked closer, all seemed to be girls, raised themselves on their elbows and stared at the intruders through their black sun glasses—all except one girl who was engrossed in a novel in a gay-coloured wrapper. The girls all wore shorts and backless singlets, and their lips and finger-nails were painted the new fashionable shade of sky-blue pink. Miss Moon felt stuffy in her dark crepe which had seemed so cool when she put it on that morning.

Everyone was relieved when Lady Charters appeared with two more young men in her wake. Miss Moon was

introduced to her by Mrs. Collingham ; the nymphs got up languidly from their mattresses, with the exception of the girl who was reading the book. Her absorption was so great that she seemed dead to anything and everything going on around her. She was only brought back to reality when one of the young men went up to her and tugged at her ankle and said, 'Get up, Virginia, we're all going in to lunch.' She put down the book with a sigh and looked round quite dazed as if she did not know where she was.

Lady Charters led the way into the large, cool dining room. There were more women than men and Miss Moon found herself sitting between the girl, Virginia, and the fair, tousle-haired young man. The young man was indulging in some private joke with the girl on his other side, so Miss Moon tried politely to engage Virginia in conversation. She was a very pretty girl with golden hair and aquamarine coloured eyes, but conversation did not seem to come easily to her. She answered vaguely, yes or no, to the questions Miss Moon politely plied her with. Yes, she did like this weather ; no, she was not going back to London to-morrow. Miss Moon was beginning to wonder whether she was not perhaps just a little bit simple, when a young man across the table caught her eye and made a face at her. She made a face back at him and shouted, 'Hi-ho,' whereupon he replied, 'Hi-ho, hi-ho—I've got a game to play with you after lunch.'

'What is it?' Her face was all animation now, her eyes alight, her ears almost flapping forward, quite different from the bored profile and unheeding ear which had received poor Miss Moon's efforts at politeness.

'I take a teeny-weeny piece of the crust of my bread,' the young man told her loudly across the table, 'and hide

it on you somewhere and then Alec has to try and find it, and when he's found it, he has to hide it on you and I have to try and find it.'

The girl shrieked with laughter. 'You are awful,' she said.

'What's that?' the fair, tousle-haired young man asked. 'Who said Alec? Who's taking my name in vain?'

'Tell him your game,' Virginia shouted across the table. 'Go on, tell him.'

Miss Moon sat back and decided that at least she was going to enjoy what she was eating, which was delicious. She had to own to herself that her failure to interest Virginia had been a very real failure, for obviously it was not that Virginia was incapable of being interested. She decided that she would make no more effort to talk to the young people on either side of her. It would be interesting to see whether they made the slightest effort to talk to her. They didn't.

After lunch, Lady Charters took Miss Moon and Mrs. Collingham over the kitchen garden where they admired the lupins very much. Then Mrs. Collingham said, 'I'm afraid we must be going. It has been so delightful, but we must get back in time for tea and you know what the traffic is on a Sunday afternoon.'

'Dear Mrs. Collingham, must you really?' and there was the first genuine ring of enthusiasm in Lady Charters' voice.

They went back by way of the swimming pool in order to say good-bye. The young people were playing little dwarfs. They were trudging behind each other in single file, almost bent double, and singing, 'Hi-ho, hi-ho, as off to work we go.' It was an antic in which they had revelled almost ceaselessly since their arrival on Friday. Even as

short a time ago as Saturday it had seemed to Lady Charters deliciously amusing. Virginia was the only one who was not playing. She was lying on a mattress with her legs cocked up, absorbed again in the same book with the gay-coloured wrapper. She did not even look up when Mrs. Collingham and Miss Moon said shyly, 'Well, good-bye, everybody. Please don't disturb yourselves.'

Lady Charters saw them into their old Vauxhall. The chauffeur put a light dust cover over their knees. The door was shut. They waved to Lady Charters out of the back window as they drove off.

'I hope you weren't too bored, dear,' said Mrs. Collingham as they passed out of the lodge gates.

'No, not bored, Etty, not bored. Just dull and middle aged. But,' she added wistfully, 'I really do think that Virginia was enjoying my new novel.'

UNKNOWN APENNINES.

BY DR. FRITZ GAUPP

THE Apennines stretch throughout the whole boot of Italy, from the fortified heights behind the Gulf of Genoa down to the southern peak of Calabria, in fact right across to Sicily. Their separate sections sometimes bear other names, but they always remain the same rough, barren mountain range, the backbone or—to keep to the boot—the shin-bone of the country. The lines and tops of the range can always be seen from both coasts, and there are peaks, from which in clear weather, the walker can catch sight of the Tyrrhene Sea in the West and the Adriatic in the East, right across the whole narrow boot.

But there are few walkers up here. The Italian from the cities does not know his Apennines. He never sets out on the tramp with rucksack and map either alone or in couples, and larger groups of 'escursionisti' mostly end very soon half-way up, round a gay camp-fire or in a country inn. The Italian will never understand that it can be a pleasure to climb a steep mountain with no house standing upon it, along a bad, scarcely visible path. The foreign traveller keeps entirely to the coast, in the cities of ancient art or in the region of the Upper Italian lakes. Neither the old Roman culture nor that of the Renaissance have penetrated right to the heights of the Apennines. Were it not for the cross-country conducting lines which to-day stretch over the heights and ridges, supplying even the most remote villages, the coastal districts and the electric railways with electric current from the mountain power-houses, there

would be found here even to-day an unchanged Italy, as it has lived and worked for centuries. Modern civilisation has passed by the Apennine peasant almost without leaving a trace. Here there lives a different race of men from that on the coast; quiet, serious, hardy, infinitely frugal and infinitely hard-working, often with only the electric wire and narrow, difficult mule-tracks to connect them with the outside world. The peasant has a strip of forest, from which he must painfully carry wood on his back to his hut, some stony fields, a few head of cattle—and a dialect, which the educated Italian himself often does not understand.

In the northern part of the range highroads and omnibus routes reach only half-way up. After only half an hour the subtropical region of the palms and of the brightly shining Mediterranean beach has been left behind. In steep, innumerable bends the road climbs over the first mountain barrier. On the level of the passes lies the water-shed. After having accompanied the road till now, the stream flows westwards into the Gulf of Genoa, while a hundred metres beneath the pass-level another thin little streamlet is already purling down the mountain—it will find companions and finally flow into the Po, which runs eastwards into the Adriatic. The road again drops somewhat, but soon comes to an end. Lines of mules stand at the omnibus-stop, their hard little hooves clattering on the village pavement. Here begins the tramp up into the second and higher chain of mountains, and all the goods which the settlements there need, have to be transported by mules.

After the region of palms that of the chestnut-forests is soon reached, where gardens, meadows and olive-trees flourish in incredible luxuriance. The village is large and clean and contains a fine old church. It is soon left far below. The path climbs steeply and suddenly the beech-

forest begins, close and shadowy, with glimmering sun-windows between the broad tree-tops. Everywhere the cuckoo is calling, the ground is covered with bilberries and wild strawberries, while in the valleys the streams go roaring through charming green meadows and drive the village mills—the way leading over soft forest paths and fresh moss. Wherever the sun shines through, blossom purple-red and yellow orchids in their thousands.

But then the last region begins, where even the beech-forest has come to an end. Cold mountain air whistles over the barren slopes, where now only short, hard grass grows between the rocks and snow lies in the clefts right on into the summer, where dark-blue gentian blossoms and sometimes a small, yellow-brown, poisonous adder lies in the sun on the hot stones. Here the climber is 1,700 metres above the sea, and the beach which was left behind a few hours ago now becomes visible again as a fine bluish streak on the horizon. One's heart flutters in the thin air, and it is only gradually that one becomes accustomed to the immense difference in height. The Madonna picture standing in a tiny stone grotto conceals a few notes and visiting cards from those who have courageously climbed the mountain. But there are only a few.

On every side, wherever one looks, are barren ridges and below them gleaming beech-forest. But in a few years the aspect of these heights will have completely changed. Whereas until a short time ago wide tracts were being cleared of timber and giant charcoal-stacks ate into the fresh beech-forests, everywhere to-day new plantations are being laid, chiefly of firs and pines. In a recent speech Mussolini said he was a passionate lover of trees. An important point in his autarchy programme is the afforestation of the Apennines, which for centuries were barbarously plundered. Every-

where are to be seen the new plantations, which are to remove Italy's lack of wood and improve the climate of these rough, unwatered mountains.

Only from the highest peaks of the Apennines are the variety and size of this mountain-range clearly to be seen. This medley of valleys and ridges, of rough precipices and soft meadows, of patches of forest and slate-dumps, looks as though two giant fists had pressed together a piece of crackling taffeta, had crumpled and creased it, and then thrown it heedlessly on the earth. Of the hundreds of mountain clefts none runs parallel to another, nowhere can a regular stratification or a system of ridges and valleys be distinguished, as for example in the Alps. It is the most disorderly mountain-range imaginable.

The reason is simple enough and needs no great geological knowledge to be understood. From what before was probably a level range the rains and the streams have torn out great pieces, washing away whole slopes, undermining peaks and causing them to crash down into the sea or the plain. Here in the Apennines the water has had an easy task and does not need centuries to dig itself a broad valley, as in granite or basalt. One spring rainfall is enough; somewhere the water soaks into a cleft of the parched ground, eats its way further in the porous rock, and if it rains for two or three weeks, the water has dug a broad bed under the earth: then it presses outwards—and one day a piece of rock suddenly breaks out from the middle of a slope and begins to slide; blocks of stone crash over it, and the whole slope has become a slippery, sliding mass, which glides down irresistibly over paths, fields, olive-slopes and huts. That is the dreaded 'Frana,' which eats away the Apennines and increases the difficulty of all work in the mountains so enormously. The Alpine peasant knows the

places where the avalanche danger exists and protects himself from them. But there is no remedy against the 'Frana.' No one can anticipate the place where a subterranean channel will form, for it must unfortunately be admitted that the Apennines consist of wretched material. Certainly here and there solid granite cliffs and mighty pinnacles of glimmering primeval rock are to be found, and in a deserted meadow one is suddenly confronted with round stone colossi, a wall of flint-rock, iron-hard fragments which on the sea-bottom have been caked into concrete, after lying here many thousands of years before the catastrophe of the Mediterranean flood occurred. But the Apennines consist chiefly of chalk-stone, loosely enclosed in earth and sand, earth which is for ever crumbling and slipping. Whole mountain-slopes are only superficially held together by trees and grass-tufts, and at the next rain-storm can take on life, irresistible as avalanches. The most dangerous and unreliable of all is the slate. That is not stone any more, the air converting it into soft, papery leaves and the rain dissolving it into viscous, gray mud. Half the mountain-range could be kicked away with the toe of one's boot, the slate always crumbling away, breaking up, soon to be ground into dust. If the path leads over a slate-heap and the climber begins to slip, there is no stopping. The only possibility is to sit down on one's trousers and slide, legs foremost if possible. Perhaps he will find a more reasonable stone further down, which will give him a firm hold. In slate one is helpless.

This is the reason why the Apennines are as crumpled as a piece of old taffeta, and also why even to-day they remain so inaccessible. Fertile and charming though the valleys of this range are, it resists man's pioneer work in a spiteful way. The Italians are perhaps the best road-builders in the world. But they have to pass through a hard school.

Every metre of road which is built along an incline, has to be supported above and below by walls, sometimes the whole mountain being cemented in up to thirty metres high ; nevertheless, in the spring, in some place which looked firm, overgrown and dry, the slope slides irresistibly down, breaks over the new road, tears bulkheads and bitumen layers away with it, crashes into the valley, and the work can begin all over again. Of what use to a new bridge are the most solid of concrete pillars or the hard rock on which they are set, if the porous, loose stone beneath it can be hollowed out at any time ? Therefore the Italians build as few bridges as possible and drive their roads along the slopes in innumerable bends, preferring to make kilometre-long detours rather than bridge over a narrow valley with a viaduct. The great cross-country roads through the Apennines, from one sea to the other, which have been built in recent years, are almost superhuman achievements of patience and endurance. But the walker, who climbs the mountains on a narrow mule-track, has to keep his hands free. He often has to support himself by clinging on, and to know whether the stone or the bush to which he clings really holds either, he must rely on the sensitiveness of his finger-tips.

The peasants who have to transport hay or wood from a high place down to their houses, have no wagons. Not even a wheelbarrow could be used here. They make shift with wire pulleys stretched across the valleys, on which a simple board is fixed from two rollers to carry the load. Through its own weight the primitive rope railway rolls into the valley, directly in front of the stable door. These fine wires stretch everywhere, often many hundred metres high, across the steep valleys. If the way home leads steeply down into the village, and is at the same time the bed of the stream with some water in it still splashing into

the valley over the smooth stones, and if this river-bed is also preferred by the oxen on their way home, with no reason to complain of bad digestion,—then the walker has a final opportunity of learning to slide. Nowhere are there sign-posts. The mule-path, which one is following, can suddenly branch off into side-tracks,—which is the right one? Perhaps one of them is for the good cattle and ends in the middle of a fine meadow, and the other in a narrow valley-bed, fifty metres above an insurmountable waterfall, because it is just here that the oxen go to drink. Then one has to retrace one's steps and climb back till somewhere else a used track appears. And this is a way to learn how to make path-finding observations, in considering how old mule-dung may be in order to serve as a valid sign-post. Finally the fact is realised that the descent has taken four hours instead of an hour and a half. Allowances must be made for such an eventuality. A tramp in the Apennines is no Sunday afternoon walk. For hours there is no one to be seen, and from which of the innumerable valleys the cattle-bells are ringing is often difficult to discover.

An encounter with the people of the Apennines is often strange. Their dialect is so marked, that they scarcely understand pure Italian. Instead they often speak English, sometimes Spanish or French, and one old peasant even spoke an unadulterated Upper Bavarian, being quite unable to contain himself as he remembered the Bavarian beer. Another peasant in the village pointed proudly to his house-gable, on which he had himself painted an English saying. He had been in America and had become rich there. They all seem to have been in America once, in the States or in the Spanish-speaking south, or at least in Southern France, as dealers in southern fruits, as waiters or builders. Unpretentious and frugal, they all seem to have brought a bit of

money home, to have married, built a house and bought land. Now they sit in the loneliness of their little mountain-villages, perhaps knowing scarcely a single Italian city, needing nothing but what the field, the forests and the stable bring them—and once upon a time were globe-trotters. Their life is not an easy one, for the dry, stony ground needs continual care, and on account of the low prices of meat, cattle-breeding can scarcely pay. But a good unbottled country-wine is everywhere to be had, besides fresh milk and butter and cheese, and in even the smallest inn of the village a white table-cloth and a snow-white bed. And what is more than these—a silent kindness and politeness, the quiet of an even, sensible life, which has not the slightest resemblance to the general conception of 'passionate Southerners'.

In the neighbourhood of Monte Penna in the Northern Apennines we arrived one evening in a quite remote village, where the marriage of the innkeeper's daughter was being celebrated. The whole village was on the dancing floor. In all haste we were brought something to eat, and then asked to take part in the festival. An accordion and an untuned violin were being played; there was much dancing and smoking, but little drinking. The Italian peasant never gets drunk. In a pretty, coloured dress and with flowers in her hair, the bride was seriously fulfilling her duty of dancing once with every lad in the village. But even prettier was a young, black-haired girl in a bright pink, silk dress, leaning near the door and not dancing—she had a wooden leg. It made a hard, dull sound when she entered. She had met with an accident a few years ago while reaping on a steep slope. She was standing in the open door of the dance-room, into which the stars were looking down from a deep-blue heaven, as though she were

watching a theatrical performance she had never seen before. Later on the bridegroom came and sat down by us for five minutes. He wore a ceremonious black suit and a white collar, too tight for him ; his face was glistening red like a tomato, and he seemed very excited. His broad, hardened hands were trembling. He thanked us for doing him the honour of taking part at his marriage. Next morning we were woken by a cow, which was being driven through the village with the herd, and inquisitively poked its head through our open window into the room. Everyone in the village was still fast asleep, except the cow-herd and us. When almost exactly a year later we came through the village again, the child of the innkeeper's daughter was three months old. In the Apennines everything has its proper order.

Below, where the chestnut forests begin, civilisation begins again too. The village church was supposed to contain a famous Madonna : we searched for it, but all we found were ordinary oleographs, and one of these it could not be. A bare-footed boy was standing by the church-door and treating us to a lengthy observation. When we passed him on our way out into the open again, he asked whether we were looking for the Madonna. Then without saying a word he went to the main altar and pulled at a green woollen cord. The altar was crowned with a tower-like superstructure and in front of this round alcove a silk curtain now moved aside to disclose a charming Madonna statue of the early Renaissance, painted in soft colours, a great work of art, alive in the cast of its folds, touching in the soft gesture of the inclined head. That was one of the small miracles in which Italy is so rich. Our other experience was now scarcely a miracle any more, so much a matter of course was it for the walled-in marble mask of a dis-

tinguished Roman lady to look out from the doorway of a vineyard down below in the sunny valley : perhaps she had had her summer villa here and the peasant had found her marble portrait on his land. Now beneath the pious saying of an early Church Father she was watching over his vine-poles. But sinking in the blue evening behind her head were the Apennines, which are older than the heathen Roman lady and the Renaissance Madonna, whose peaks would scarcely be changed in a single line by thousands of years of slow decay.

Florence.

BUGLES AT DUSK.

*I saw the wild ducks flying
Like pennants, gustily ;
Heard quick, harsh voices crying
An ancient prophecy,*

*That told of summer's going,
And autumn's russet breath,
Of winter, and of snowing,
White silences and death.*

*But was that all ? Denying
That life can know eclipse,
They were faith's bugles crying
Love's old apocalypse.*

JOHN RICHARD MORELAND.

*Spottswood Manor,
Norfolk, Va.*

KRASPIN.

BY DOROTHY CARUS.

I.

KRASPIN's eyes shone like chips of blue ice between his half-closed lids. They were always screwed up, the eyes of Kraspin, for ever since they had escaped from the dire necessity of scanning the pages of school books they had scanned, with greater care and more profit, the dazzling snowfields and glaciers among which he had earned his living. It had been good living and good earning, too, in his youth and his prime. Now he sat in his old age on the sunny bench beside the door of his home, and his blue eyes from a network of lines and wrinkles scanned the village street. He saw folk of flesh and blood going about their business and pleasure, but sometimes as he watched them, a laugh, a look, a sudden gesture would turn his mind back into the past and people the village street with other folk of other days. In the laughter of Anna Bichler, as she parted from a friend at the door of the greengrocer, Kraspin heard the laughter of her grandmother, and suddenly he was there at that very door. It was night, but not dark, for a full moon shone in the sky, and the world was bright with new-fallen snow.

'Why do you laugh at me, Anna?'

'Because you are so romantic and—and—so young. But I like you, little Kraspin.'

With that he had to be content. They were having a Christmas party at the Bichlers'. Yellow light streamed out

through the chinks of the shutters and streaked the blue whiteness of the snow upon the window-ledge. There were some large flakes lying lightly on the top that shone blue, green and yellow. Perhaps diamonds shone like that. Kraspin had never seen any, but he imagined as he went on alone under the bright moon that the trees were hung with diamonds. They were like tall Christmas trees, the trees of the forest through which he had to pass on the way home. He imagined that they were Christmas trees for him, hung with diamonds that he would take to Anna. The finest he would take to her, and the others he would sell. Then he would be very rich and marry Anna, and give his father and mother a grand house where they could live and never have to work for anyone else again. These thoughts were a comfort to him, they also prevented him from thinking too much of the Bichlers' party, and of Toni Bichler, who was grown up and worked for his father in the shop. He rubbed his smooth face with a half-frozen hand and thought that one day he would grow a beard or whiskers like the Kaiser Franz-Josef; whichever would be most pleasing to Anna. And then Anna would prefer him to Toni Bichler and not laugh at him and call him 'little Kraspin.' He was not so small either for thirteen, and already doing a man's work on the farm. True, Anna was taller than he, but then she was nearly twenty and had stopped growing, while he, so his mother said, was growing out of his clothes as fast as he had them put on him.

When he got home he found that his mother had a little small Christmas tree for him in the bedroom. But there were no diamonds on it, only some nuts in coloured paper and some very stale gingerbreads.

II.

High in the mountains there was a hut. In it was a stove, a table, a wooden bench, and a pile of hay fastened in with boards that made a warm bed with a sack or two for covering. There were wide pans for setting milk and a high tapering wooden tub for butter making. Under the hut in a rough cellar scraped out of the mountain-side there were cheese moulds and presses. In winter the hut was buried under deep drifts of snow. For many months no track but the triangular spoor of the mountain hare marked the white waste, and no sound at all broke the unearthly stillness. Then came the soft sounds of thaw, the regular drip, drip of water from the eaves, the rustle of slipping snow and the tinkle of breaking icicles. Under a strengthening sun the brook ran free and bubbled once again with cheerful sound among the stones. The warm south wind blew, and soon the bare patches of frost-burnt grass were abloom with flowers.

In June the hut, still empty and forlorn, stood in a paradise of alpine beauty, and at the end of that month the solitude of the high alm was broken and the silence filled with the sound of bells and Kraspin's merry whistling. Up from the valley came the cows and goats slowly climbing with the boy at their heels. He carried on his back an immense basket and his mother was likewise burdened. He was happy, for it was always an adventure coming again to the hut where he would live all the short summer. It always gave him an exciting feeling to enter the green amphitheatre beneath the grey cragged peaks and to catch the first sight of the hut, empty, shuttered, and waiting for him. He loved to throw open the windows and let in the sweet-scented air and to kindle the first unwilling fire in the rusted stove.

There was always a lot of cleaning and sweeping to be done, and the pans had to be scoured before the warm, fresh milk stood once again in them. His mother helped him the first day. From time to time she would come again to the hut during the summer to make butter and cheese and to bring him more provisions. Between such visits he was quite alone in the green bowl lifted high above the valley where people went about their business in a noisy world of traffic and trade. He worked and dreamed in solitude, seldom feeling lonely and never at a loss for occupation. He had many beasts to tend and milk. The cattle were easy to mind, but the goats led him often into places that were dangerous for anything less sure-footed than themselves and little Kraspin. Like the goats, he, too, had an instinct for picking his way safely about crag and precipice, and, like theirs, his head remained untroubled by the dizzy heights he trod in their company. He went bare-footed. A bruise or a cut on his flesh would mend itself, but the boots his father bought out of scant earnings were not mended without cost. The worst pain that Kraspin knew was the pain of seeing his mother's look when there was something unexpected to pay for. His parents worked for the farmer who owned the cattle Kraspin herded in the mountain pasture.

One day as he wandered after the goats he came upon a patch of blue gentians and started to gather them. Larger and larger grew the vivid blue bunch. He thought he would fill a milk-pan with them for his mother. So intent was he on his occupation and so little used to any human interruption, that he was more startled than the goats when, hearing an unusual sound, he looked up and saw a lady walking towards him. She wore a skirt shorter than any he had ever seen on the village women, and a funny little hat

perched up on the top of masses of brown hair. He had never seen a lady with such clothes and such a quantity of hair. He stood and stared at her. She smiled when she saw him and said : ' Oh, what a lovely bunch of flowers.' He felt that she expected him to give them to her, but he would not, and when after a pause she asked him for them, he said ' No.'

Her eyebrows went up then and she looked half amused, half annoyed as she said : ' You want to keep them all for yourself then ?'

' No,' he answered quickly again. ' They are for my mother.'

She looked at him then so sweetly that, with a sudden desire to please her, he exclaimed : ' But there are many more, I will pick you a bunch too if you wait.'

She talked to him as he gathered the flowers for her. ' What is your name, little boy ?'

It did not please him to be called little boy ; he answered curtly : ' Rudolf Kraspin.'

' So ? I have a boy called Rudolf too, only he is hardly a boy any more now.' She spoke sadly as if she regretted it.

' Does he not bring you flowers ?' asked Kraspin, thinking that perhaps the poor lady envied his mother the fine bunch he had picked. She smiled at that, but still spoke sadly.

' Yes, he brings me flowers sometimes, but he brings me worries too.'

That was bad ; little Kraspin shook his head and said with complete conviction : ' I'll never worry my mother.'

' Perhaps when you grow older you will,' said the lady, but Kraspin still shook his head and answered : ' When I grow older I'm going to get rich, and then I'll give my mother a house and a girl to wait on her, and she'll never

be tired again or cry because there isn't enough to get me new boots.'

'And how are you going to get rich?' she asked.

At that Kraspin had to shake his head again, but he added hopefully: 'Perhaps I could be a mountain guide,' though he knew well enough that he could never afford the time and training for such an envied position. He had gathered another big bunch of gentians and came now with them close to the stone on which the lady had seated herself. She had drawn off one of the leather gloves she wore, and as she put her hand out for the flowers, something flashed so brilliantly that Kraspin blinked and stared with awe at her finger. So that was how diamonds looked. They were brighter by far than the snow on the forest trees under a full moon.

'Are you interested in diamonds?' she asked smilingly as she followed his ardent gaze. He nodded and said with conviction:

'One day I shall give them to Anna. A ring, I shall buy for her just like that.'

'And who may this lucky Anna be?'

But he would not tell her. He could not speak of Anna to anyone. It was as she rose from the stone that Kraspin noticed that the lady was not alone as he had supposed. Some distance away, lurking among rocks, he saw a mountain guide laden with rucksacks and another lady standing a few paces in advance of him. Towards these other people his lady now moved, signing to him to accompany her.

'Is there no alm hut in this neighbourhood where we can get milk?' she asked her guide as he approached, hat in hand, to meet her. The man answered that there was one such hut, but that they must make a detour to reach it.

'Why, that is my hut you speak of!' cried Kraspin.

'But you don't need to go all that way. Come with me. I will lead you.'

The guide looked angry and contemptuous, the other lady anxious and timid, but the one who held Kraspin's bouquet of gentians put her hand on his shoulder and said: 'You shall be our guide, Rudolf Kraspin.'

He led them safely to the hut and gave the ladies milk to drink. They walked off together down the path, leaving the guide to pay so handsomely for the milk that Kraspin stared in alarm at the money.

'Who is that lady?' he asked, and the guide, still contemptuous, replied: 'Are your folk so poor, then, that they cannot afford a picture of their empress?'

When his mother heard the story she cried: 'Oh, Rudolf, and you in such a jacket!' and sat down to mend and re-mend his shabby coat.

III.

And so it came about that Kraspin became a guide famous in his time and day. There were years of hard training in mountain climbing, first aid, and weather wisdom before he could obtain his badge and start to win well-earned fame and a good income among the barren peaks and the beautiful death-dealing glaciers. He worked at other things too during his period of training. He ran messages, carried baggage, cleaned boots and did anything at all that brought in a few coins, for in Innsbruck where part of his training had taken him, he had seen a ring fit for Anna, a ring not unlike in shape, though probably unlike in value, the ring he had seen shining on the small imperial hand of his patroness. Anna's hands were large and brown but beautiful in shape, he thought, and well worthy in any case to be graced by a fine ring. So he worked and saved and

skimped and dreamed and bought the ring at last on the day that he returned home to hear of Anna's marriage with Toni Bichler.

How could Anna have waited after all for ragged little Kraspin to grow into a man and marry her? She was older than he, and youth flies quickly among the peasants. So she married Toni Bichler, who was a handsome young man and kept the grocery stores. Kraspin could have sold the ring now that his dream had vanished, but he kept it in secret and worked and saved again for another dream that he had dreamt often among the mountains in his cattle-herding days. And presently he was earning what seemed to him a fortune. Then to the tune of hammer and saws, and with a smell of new wood and paint, his dream came true and he built a house for his mother, who was now a widow. He bought a site at the top of the village nearly opposite the grocery stores, and from his window he could see Anna coming and going between the market, the church and her home. He saw her grow heavy with Toni Bichler's child. On a dark spring night, damp and sweet-scented, it was he who ran at Toni's urgent behest for a doctor, but even with that unusual assistance at the birth of a peasant's child, it was only the child itself that lived by the morning. Kraspin wept with Toni Bichler in the shuttered room where Anna lay, and on their broad shoulders Anna went to the church for the last time.

A few days later a comforting thought came to Kraspin.

The villagers had piled her grave with flowers, for she had been a kind-hearted, merry girl, and they wished, too, to show sympathy for her young husband. The nights were still dark, for the moon was new and early gone from the skies. Few would have dared to go among the dead at midnight, for piety was richly interwoven with superstition

in the peasant mind. Kraspin himself was not without a sense of fear which was overlaid by a sense of purpose and an instinct for ritual, so that he knelt in prayer by the faded flowers before digging beneath them a deep narrow hole. The few vaporous stars were not bright enough to catch an answering gleam from that which Kraspin dropped into the earth of Anna's grave. So had he kept the promise he had made himself and brought diamonds to his boyhood's love.

IV.

The people in the village liked Kraspin. He was honest and kind-hearted in his dealings, and as the years went by his presence brought visitors, who in their turn brought trade, interest and even excitement to the quiet little village under the glaciers and the rocky peaks. That day on the mountains when as a ragged barefooted boy he had first guided an empress was not the last time that he went in royal company among the alpine flowers. But tragedy lay heavy-handed on the lady with the beautiful hair to whom he had refused the gentians gathered for his mother. She wrote once in her own hand to the peasant woman who had been so shocked to think that royal eyes should rest upon her son's patched jacket. 'You are a happier mother than I.' It was true.

As she got older and her son got richer, Kraspin's mother had a girl to wait on her, and as she had never had a daughter, the girl became more like a member of the family than a paid servant. There was no difference in birth between them and no difference in outlook save that of age. But the young folk in the village saw little of the outer world to change them from the pious, high-spirited, hard-working ways of their parents. Love and Religion dominated their emotional life, and the struggle for existence took all else

that mind and body could supply. There were courtships by night through softly opened windows. There were fights, ecclesiastical reprimands and hasty marriages, births and deaths. But none of these things had place in the home Kraspin had built for himself and his mother. His tenderness was all for her now. Often he brought her flowers from the high places, pale edelweiss velvety soft, and the golden platenigl to fill the room with an intoxicating sweetness; flowers plucked from the giddy edge of death. The young girl who worked for them cherished Kraspin's flowers. She loved the thick-set bearded man whose bright blue eyes looked at her with too much kindness to kindle a hope within her of anything more than gratitude for her wholehearted service. She was content to serve, and happy to live under the same roof as her idol.

Perhaps she was happy, too, to see that at least Kraspin paid no attention to any other woman. When he was at home he busied himself mostly in the garden, or in playing with the little son that Anna Bichler had left, and when the boy grew old enough he was often to be seen on the mountains in company with the guide whose fame brought credit to the village. His mother lived to see Kraspin a great man in his way. At the height of his career she died peacefully, comforted by the rites of the Church and the presence of her son. She had had fifteen happy years in the house he had built for her.

Kraspin married the girl who had made his mother's life easy and comfortable. He was fond of her and grateful, and the thought of the house without her was too disconsolate to face. She made him happy and comfortable too, and gave him three children—a son, a daughter, and later another son. Before the last was born Kraspin was away for three years at the war. When he came back he had

other medals to hang beside those he had won for life-saving. His eldest boy made a little case for them which hung on the wall of the living-room under the portraits of the Emperor and Empress. But the imperial days were gone, and with them some of the magic of romance that had softened the hard lives of the peasantry. The humblest home had taken pride, interest, and, in imagination, even a share in the life royal. Of what interest was the private life of a president? Who cared what his womenfolk wore or where they went? Only the pageantry of the Church remained to colour the bleak lives and the fertile imagination of a people accustomed through the ages to the trappings of pomp and to the pride of power. Pride and power and pomp had vanished almost overnight from a land with long traditions of all three. There was a hunger in the hearts of the people, and for a time a greater hunger in their bodies. Not a cat remained alive in the village, and every edible fungus that the forest yielded, every berry, bird or mammal that the girls and young men could hunt on the mountain was brought home to the harassed housewives. When a cat cooked in the stew, Kraspin would leave the house. The smell of it turned his stomach, he said, but the children didn't care, and it was better that they should have it in any case.

The times grew better, starvation became only an ugly dream, and what seemed almost like prosperity after the grim years returned to Austria; a truncated Austria, hardly able to support a city that had once been the capital of an empire. Actual hunger was gone from the village where Kraspin's family was growing up, but another hunger still remained. Kraspin saw it in the eyes of his children as he told them stories of the old days. To them the fairy stories told by their mother were no more fantastic than the true tales

related by their father. They wearied of both as they grew older. They wanted something real. Life was real, but it was dull compared with the magic possibilities of fairy tales. No longer could one hope to meet an empress on the mountain-side. No longer was there any hope of anything much except the negative and fearful hope not to be left without employment and not to be taxed any higher.

Kraspin was better off than most, for the tourist traffic was increasing. His eldest son became a ski instructor, his daughter helped at the big new hotel. His youngest son, his favourite, Hans, was still at school when his mother died. In the lean years after the war she had starved herself almost to death that the children might eat, and had never properly recovered from an illness that had come upon her at that time. There were three graves in the churchyard that he tended now. Toni Bichler's bones lay far away from those of his wife, for he had been killed in the war. His son had the shop, and had, too, a little daughter named after her grandmother.

V.

The years brought Kraspin to the end of his official period for mountain guiding. Hans followed his father and kept the name of Kraspin on the growing list of guides. Old Kraspin sat at home on his favourite bench against the house wall and watched the life of the village through half-closed eyes. His eldest son was married, and his wife looked after the house. His daughter was married, too, to the grandson of the farmer for whom Kraspin and his parents had worked. She lived in the wide-roofed house up the valley beyond the forest through which, as a boy, Kraspin had passed and dreamed of magic happenings.

A new magic had come upon the land of late. Things

almost undreamt of, things despairingly un hoped for, had happened in Austria. There was pride and power again to quicken the dull lives of the people and drive them to a frenzy of excitement. Even Kraspin's old blood had warmed to the sound of tramping feet. Romance had touched reality once more, and there was a brightness in the eyes of the young men and a firmness in their tread that had been lacking. But there was fear in Kraspin's mind, a fear that grew with the months. This was not the magic of tradition; the miracles it performed were not brought about by saintliness and royal kindness. It went back beyond the times of kings and queens and saints and civilisations; it went back to the days when wolf-packs ravaged the dark pine forest and bayed for the blood of everything outside the pack, even for the blood of their own kind should they be weak and unprotected. It was black magic. Yet it did good. On every side the good it did could be seen, could be heard of, could be read about, and was ceaselessly proclaimed. Kraspin did not deny it. But in the imagination of his intuitive mind he had vision of a darkness in which horrible distorted shapes moved. What was it? He had outlived his time, that was all. He did not understand the new ways of a new world which would, his sons assured him, be better than the old, a world, a German world that would, so the young men said, be a world of justice and peace with honour.

His eldest son tore down the pictures of the Emperor and Empress. Was that justice, Kraspin wondered? It was his house and they were his own pictures. If his sons did not like them, neither did he like the picture they put in place of his. Hans, shamefaced, saved the highly coloured print of the Empress and asked his father to hide it away. Hans was a good kind-hearted boy, so was his brother, so were most of the young men in the valley. Kraspin knew them

all, knew them to be brave, honest, good-natured fellows. Why then, in the echo of their songs and slogans, did he seem to hear a snarling and a howling?

They were good boys. He knew them well. But he was old. He was full of queer fancies. As a child he had been full of fancies, and now as an old man they were taking possession of his mind again. Only one thing he knew with certainty; he had outlived his time. Perhaps, after all, Anna had been the lucky one. Young and fair and deeply mourned, she had gone from life. With him it was otherwise. Life had gone from him and left him a living ghost to sit dreaming of the dead.

Hans came to him where he sat in the sunshine and said: 'Father, now that things are so much better and I can get a bonus for marrying, I have spoken to Anna.'

'Anna!' cried Kraspin, starting out of a half dream.

'Yes, Anna Bichler—you know, Father, the grocer's daughter from the house opposite there.' Hans felt he had to be very explicit, for his father seemed puzzled and vague, although he knew Anna Bichler as well almost as if she had been his own granddaughter.

'Ach! Anna Bichler,' said the old man. 'So you are to marry with little Anna, then. I am glad of it, Hans.'

If he were glad, why did tears spring suddenly into his eyes? His father was old and had always been sentimental. Perhaps, thought Hans, he weeps for my joy.

‘LA PRESSE.’

BY HERBERT A. WALTON.

THE curiosity of our friends the French remains as conspicuous a national characteristic as it was in the eighteenth century when it was satirised so delightfully by Montesquieu in his *Lettres Persanes*. Its persistence is one of the commonplace observations forced on the frequenter of the Grands Boulevards, where the slightest incident brings together a crowd, the *spirituel* members of which indulge in Parisian comments on what is happening. But, outside these trivial manifestations, the national attribute has been responsible for France's magnificent contributions to scientific discovery and intellectual advancement.

This reflection on the generous endowment of the French with the gift of inquisitiveness has intruded itself here at the outset as furnishing an explanation of the great number and infinite variety of the country's newspapers. It is always risky to set down the number of the capital's papers, for the figure of to-day may not be accurate to-morrow; but at the moment of writing the morning and evening papers of Paris total near fifty. Is not an insatiable national curiosity—as well as a passion for controversy—here indicated? There are at least ten important daily (morning) papers, another dozen of sectional influence, and beyond these are others that appeal specially to financial or sporting interests, or are run by small political groups. Then, in addition to Paris-Midi, there are five influential evening papers. *La Liberté*, after many vicissitudes, recently changed into a morning paper. It became an organ of the Fascist Parti

Populaire Français, but expired recently. Paris, in short, with its 3,000,000 population, possesses thrice as many dailies and evenings as London, with its 8,000,000. But our Sunday press must not be forgotten.

No wonder then, that the reading of the French Press, if it is to be completely informative, implies an understanding of various complicated matters. It is patent to everyone that this journal is of the Right, this other of the Left; but not until the veil is lifted can the stranger possibly understand the varieties of shade in Right and Left. To obtain a complete impression of the political movements of the country, *Le Matin*, *Le Figaro*, *Le Jour-Écho de Paris*, *L'Ordre*, *L'Époque* must be read for their degrees of Conservatism; *L'Œuvre*, *L'Ère Nouvelle* (organ of the Radical-Socialist party), *La République*, *Le Populaire* (organ of M. Léon Blum) for their varying interpretations of Radicalism and Socialism. A study of *Le Peuple*, run in the interests of the *Confédération Générale du Travail*, is essential for following trade-union movements.

Moreover, to gather an adequate idea of what is going on, it is necessary to know of the politician, the financier or the *grand industriel* behind a paper—that is, behind it at the moment, for the influences supplying funds and dictating policy are transitory. It smacks, no doubt, of *lèse majesté* nowadays to suggest that Great Press Proprietors are not immortal, yet it is fact that even they must face the day when, like old Omar's 'foolish prophets', 'their words to scorn are scattered, and their mouths are stopt with dust'. Or, as Stendahl put it; '*L'homme qui a réunit quelques millions achète un journal, et se fait prôner pendant huit ou dix ans de suite*'.

So, the 'births and deaths' of the Press are bewilderingly frequent. There is a birth arising out of circumstances in

which an individual, a party, or a section of a party needs a vehicle through which to reach the public; there is a death due to the fact that that necessity for or the usefulness of the particular propaganda has ceased to exist. Thus neither the appearance on the boulevard kiosks of a newcomer nor the disappearance of a contemporary is a matter for surprise. Not very long ago, for instance, *La Presse* failed to appear. This evening paper, founded in 1836 by one of the masters of French journalism, Émile de Girardin, had a great history behind it, yet its unheralded demise a year or two ago caused little comment. One evening last year it was again on the kiosks, just as though there had been no interruption in its career. And it expired once more quite recently. Thus two evening papers that had played important parts in the life of Paris for a century have now gone. *La Liberté*, whose demise has been chronicled, was founded in 1831, and it, like *La Presse*, owed its success to de Girardin.

While the reason for the appearance of a new paper or a change of proprietorship of an existing organ is often hidden from the general public, there are cases that are not shrouded in any mystery. Everyone was made aware that *Ce Soir* was started as a reinforcement of the Popular Front; and there could be no misconception as to the object with which Col. de la Rocque acquired control of *Le Petit Journal*, formerly a most influential Radical Right Wing organ; his purpose, as readers are reminded day by day, is to advance the interests of the Fascist Parti Social Français, successor to the Croix de Feu. But to obtain a real appreciation of the purposes behind numerous Press changes, one must have information additional to such avowed intentions.

A fundamental fact to be borne in mind is that, with certain exceptions, the papers of Paris are far from being

self-supporting. Many provincial organs have substantial advertising, and are, consequently, well-to-do, but the typical business and commercial men of the capital are only gradually awakening to the uses of publicity; consequently most of the papers are supported from other sources. Those sources include subsidies from the Government, political parties, commercial interests, or individuals. Much illumination is shed on this point in the report of the Commission which inquired into the Stavisky scandal. A perfectly straightforward epitome of the situation was given by M. Daladier in his examination regarding the Government's association with the Press during his former Premiership. 'Most of the papers,' he said, 'are assisted by all Governments. In the present state of the French Press the papers which live by their business—sale, subscriptions, purely commercial advertisements—are very few, and if you started inquiring into their means of subsistence it would be a formidable affair.'

The 'Toll for the Brave'¹ in regard to the Press of Paris would be truly mournful, yet not so mournful as that for the Press of London, for, while the casualties might make a greater total, the disasters to front-rank journals of the French capital have been nothing comparable to those involved in the disappearance of the *Tribune*, *Standard*, *Morning Leader*, *Daily Chronicle*, *Morning Post*, *Globe*, *St. James's Gazette*, *Westminster Gazette*. With the exceptions of *Le Gaulois* and *L'Écho de Paris*, the great papers of Paris remain. The diminishing glory of some of them is off-set by the advancement of new-comers to the front-rank. One of the casualties of recent days, *Le Quotidien*, furnishes an

¹ Under this title, in the *CORNHILL MAGAZINE* for November, 1938, Mr. W. J. Blyton recorded the casualties of British journalism and periodical literature.

example of how a Paris paper rises and expires. It was launched by an influential political group 'to defend and perfect Republican institutions.'

L'Ami du Peuple is another instance of a paper which had its day and ceased to be. It was started by M. François Coty, the perfume manufacturer, who had first indulged his ambition to become a Press magnate by buying Le Figaro and Le Gaulois. Some time after the 'merging' of the latter into the former, M. Coty, fired with a desire to cater for the masses as well as for the classes, started L'Ami du Peuple at the revolutionary price of ten centimes, compared with 25 c., then the price of most of the papers (to-day the general price is 50 c. ; Le Temps is 75 c.). M. Coty encountered formidable opposition from the other papers, as well as from the powerful distributing house of Hachette. Undismayed, he set up his own distributing organisation. He agreed eventually to increase the price of L'Ami du Peuple to 15 c. The paper disappeared in M. Coty's general financial misfortunes.

Of the five journals that used to be described as constituting *La Grande Presse*—Le Matin, Le Journal, Le Petit Journal, Le Petit Parisien and L'Écho de Paris—only one, the last-named, is dead. The Royalist organ, Le Gaulois, was, as stated, merged a decade ago in Le Figaro. Those of a passing generation who were attached to the paper dominated by that picturesque figure, Arthur Meyer, one of the last of the boulevardiers, must reflect, when noting the very small type to which the words Le Gaulois have been reduced under the title of Le Figaro, on the real meaning of the 'merging' of one paper in a more powerful contemporary. More happily, the memory of the Écho de Paris, merged not so long ago in Le Jour, is still green, for the title of the reinforced paper is Le Jour-Écho de Paris.

Naturally no purchaser has time or inclination to speak the full title.

The passing of the *Écho de Paris*, a Conservative organ to which a band of brilliant writers was attached, was certainly the most noteworthy of the casualties of recent years. Some time before the catastrophe there had been in the office of the *Écho* disagreements which led its editor-in-chief, M. Henri Simond, to start a new paper, *L'Époque*. He was accompanied by M. Henri de Kerillis and other members of the staff. The well-known diplomatic journalist 'Pertinax' (M. André Géraud) remained with the *Écho* up to its death early last year, after which he became editor of the weekly *L'Europe Nouvelle*. In that position and in other quarters he continues to give evidence of his remarkable knowledge of inner political events. Rather curiously, this distinguished journalist, who contributed so substantially to the reputation of a Conservative organ which devoted itself specially to military as well as ecclesiastical affairs, has in recent years been challenged in his own domain by a woman writer attached to the Radical-Socialist *Œuvre*.—Mme. Geneviève Tabouis, who, with her uncanny acquaintance of movements in various Chancellories of Europe, has been the most quoted of all journalists during the international crises of the last few years.

Le Jour was founded five years ago by M. Léon Bailby, formerly of *L'Intransigeant*, as a Nationalist and Conservative morning. To-day, as *Le Jour-Écho de Paris*, it can claim to be a member of *La Grande Presse*. There was a fine literary flavour in the *Écho de Paris*, the regular contributors to which included Maurice Barrès and Paul Bourget, and eminent *littérateurs* now write in the combined paper. Another paper now in *La Grande Presse* is *Excelsior*. It is a first-class daily picture paper, but it is also an important

journal d'information, as distinct from a *journal d'opinion*—the two broad categories into which the Press of Paris is divided.

The outstanding example of a journal's rapid advance is that of *Paris-Soir*. Its rise, indeed, is one of the romances of the world's modern journalism. It is not many years since the dominating cry of the boulevard newsvendors was 'L'*Intran troisième !*', the cry of 'Paris-Soir !' making a very modified volume. But *Paris-Soir* went on from strength to strength until to-day it has a circulation of something approaching two millions. L'*Intransigeant*, though ousted from its former supremacy, continues to be a prosperous concern. *Paris-Soir's* initial advance was due largely to its giving considerable space to illustrations, but, in addition to its numerous pictures, it has organised an important world service of news, and has constantly increased its influence by its special articles on international affairs. Its special correspondents penetrate every corner of the earth.

It is *Paris-Soir* that stands out conspicuously—blatantly—as the exponent of the present-day make-up of the Paris Press. This make-up marks the revolution that has taken place in the journalism of France, as in that of other countries. According to the tenets of modern journalism it is not enough to give the news, leaving its interpretation to the readers ; the news must be rammed into the head (head, not brain, is, surely, *le mot juste*) of the reader by means of gigantic headlines, followed by vast displays of summary in black-type. This is the American way of 'telling the story' at a glance. *Paris-Soir's* front-page headlines seem to be brazen symbols of the paper's amazing success. If you happen to want to see the actual news thus heralded, with so utter a disregard for space, you are informed that you will find it elsewhere—*Voir Page 3, Les détails Page 4, Nos informations en Page 5.*

While Paris-Soir leads in this arresting type of news presentation, many other papers have gone a long way in the same direction. It is an old habit of the Paris papers to give the beginning of a 'story' (the blessed word applied by the modern newspaper man to every kind of contribution) on the front page, and, as mentioned above, to continue it on another page; but the introduction of great headlines, over several columns, or even across a whole page, is in the new order of things. A transformation of make-up in varying degrees has, in short, taken place generally. The veteran Parisian shakes his head sadly and despairingly at what he regards as the sensational headlines of even Le Figaro and Le Journal. *Où sont les journaux d'antan ?* he asks plaintively.

But there are still soberly presented newspapers for Parisians of the old school. No doubt the headlines with which Le Temps, which was founded in 1861, introduces important news would shock the Hébrard dynasty by which it was so long controlled, but it remains one of the most substantial papers of the world. Its views are as authoritative as its immense pages are impressive. It continues to have the reputation of reflecting in its foreign policy the views of the Quai d'Orsay. Apart from that, it is now representative to a considerable degree of the industrial and financial groups that acquired it a few years ago—groups dominating the iron and steel and the coal industries and great insurance companies. But, while concerning itself largely with financial and industrial affairs, Le Temps sustains its position as the semi-official exponent of French policy, and it is extensively quoted throughout the world. At the same time it devotes much attention to literature. As a record of events it is indispensable to the student of French affairs. It does not hesitate to devote a dozen columns to a

report of the reception of a new member of the *Académie Française*. The comprehension of Great Britain easily discernible in its leading articles, is, no doubt, explained by the intimate acquaintance of its editor, M. Jacques Chastenet, an ex-diplomat, with our country.

A still more notable record of longevity is that of the *Journal des Débats* which has witnessed the vicissitudes and the excitements of France during a century and a half. With *Le Temps* it shares the distinction of presenting itself in the old-style make-up, nothing more sensational having been permitted than an indulgence in a few double-column headlines. The *Débats* has great political and literary traditions behind it. Its founder, Bertin de Vaux, is immortalised in a portrait by Ingres in the Louvre. Bertin de Vaux had a lordly way with him, and his portrait sheds illumination on Victor Hugo's remark that 'il portait sa bonne vieille bourgeoisie de l'air dont les marquis portent leur marquisat'. He gathered around him a band of distinguished writers, among them Chateaubriand. It is not easy to picture the author of *Le Génie du Christianisme* as a working journalist, but it is a fact that he turned out much 'copy' in the office of the *Débats*. He was, in fact, proud of the *métier*, and on one occasion, when being prosecuted for some literary offence, he proclaimed himself 'René de Chateaubriand, journaliste'. Though the *Débats* of to-day by no means neglects literature, it—like *Le Temps*—devotes itself largely to the interests of the heavy industries. Many people must, indeed, find all the financial and commercial intelligence they want in these two distinctive papers. If they need more it is provided for them in *La Journée Industrielle* and *L'Information*.

The status of the French journalist is high. For various reasons it behoves important people on the other side of

the Channel to cultivate friendly relations with him. They are afraid of the Press which, despite recent legislative measures to tighten up the libel laws, indulges in an outspokenness in regard to political personalities unlike anything known here. Such epithets as scoundrel, imbecile, toady, etc., are freely hurled by certain papers at party opponents. An education in a fearful and wonderful section of the French vocabulary is to be obtained from the polemical articles of Léon Daudet in the *Action Française*; he is, perhaps, the greatest master of devastating descriptions of those with whom he disagrees. Forceful, too, are the personal observations directed to M. Daudet by those in opposite camps.

In his contact with exalted ones and officials, the French journalist is insistent on his rights and emphatic about his privileges. There is a sublime story about a war correspondent who, when a general refused him permission to follow certain operations in the Franco-Prussian war, replied, 'Very well, General, there will be no allusion in my paper to this battle!' Some people may consider this implied an exaggerated view of the dignity of the profession! Of course journalism in France is the ante-chamber to high political office; as Thiers said, '*Le journalisme mène à tout.*' The proportion of Cabinet Ministers who began as journalists is illuminatingly large.

The old discussion as to the thinness or otherwise of the line dividing journalism from literature is of particular interest when it is the French Press that is in question. There is more literature in the papers of Paris than in those of London—that is a fairly safe assertion to make when the comparison is modern. It is common to see articles by members of the *Académie Française* in *Le Temps*, the *Journal des Débats*, *Le Figaro*, *Le Journal*, *Excelsior*, and *Le Jour-*

Écho de Paris. Le Figaro has always devoted much attention to literature, and its reputation in this domain has been more than sustained since, following its unfortunate Coty régime, it came under the control of a new administration, including André Maurois. Its Literary Supplements are distinctive. It is of interest to note that, amid its changes of ownership, Le Figaro, the social register of Parisian life, retains under its title the immortal words put by Beaumarchais into the mouth of the delightful character after whom the paper is named :—‘ Loué par ceux-ci, blâmé par ceux-là, me moquant des sots, bravant les méchants, je me presse de rire de tout . . . de peur d’être obligé d’en pleurer.’

The *feuilleton*, of course, has always been a feature of the French Press, and there are no signs of its ever being crushed out by the news. Even the stately Temps gives its readers a serial story. Many well-known works that attained celebrity made their first appearance in *feuilleton* form. The Journal des Débats had a century ago an experience that any paper of to-day would be happy to repeat. Its publication of *Les Mystères de Paris* caused its circulation to soar incredibly, and the offices were besieged by people who had been unable to obtain copies at the kiosks. To sustain this burst of prosperity the proprietors played a malicious trick on the public ; now and again they announced that a day’s instalment had to be held over, with the consequence that thousands of non-regular readers immersed in Eugène Sue’s thriller bought copies in which they had no interest.

Then, apart from these definitely literary aspects, there is distinction of style in the presentation of certain types of news. The tendency, so pronounced in England, to give news in an unadorned form, is revealing itself in the French Press, but within much stricter limits ; and many of its reports of events and of gatherings which under our modern

methods here are reduced to catalogue-like records, are written with a certain literary charm. In England even the 'star reporter' is often severely sub-edited, and the old substantial descriptive writing is, generally speaking, a memory. But *le grand reportage* flourishes in undiminished vigour in a Press that is the most individual in the world, and the writer is allowed a catholic latitude in his own mode of expression. It is, of course, a convention among superior people to sneer at *charabia journalistique*; but it is a fact that the average French reporter knows well his delicate subtle language and is competent to make charming use of it in his descriptive work. In the lighter phases of journalism our colleagues undoubtedly allow their passion for the manner rather than the matter to run away with them; and sometimes when a reader has *goûté* a brightly-written account of some happening he has to read it again to decide what precisely it is all about!

There is one department of journalism in which our French friends have always been supreme—the *chronique*. How, in one English word, could one describe this 'article de journal où se trouvent les faits, les nouvelles du jour, les bruits de la ville'?—to give Larousse's definition? It is a feature that is being ousted from the London Press by the ever-growing passion for social tittle-tattle. Compare this pitiable twaddle with Clément Vautel's *Mon Film* in *Le Journal* or with the *Hors d'Œuvre* by Georges de la Fouchardière in *L'Œuvre*. Here are two outstanding examples of how, day by day—and for seven days a week—the French *chroniquer* deals interestingly and distinctively with passing events. These writers differ widely in their outlook on life, but as journalists they equally furnish remarkable illustrations of how the master of the *chronique* can invest *les nouvelles du jour* with illuminating interest. A British

journalist of the past who produced, to the great joy of his readers, a column approximating to the French *chronique* was Spencer Leigh Hughes, in the old Morning Leader.

A type of journalism vastly different from that of the light *chronique* is the heavy polemical writing of which M. Charles Maurras is a master. M. Maurras is a prodigious worker, and the several-columns-long articles in which day by day he expounds his Monarchist and allied doctrines, in L'Action Française, stand out startlingly in contrast to the snippets of modern journalism.

To the Anglo-Saxon, the violence, already alluded to, of the papers comprehended in the category of the *journaux d'opinion* is both startling and amusing. At the extreme end in each direction are L'Action Française, Royalist, and L'Humanité, Bolshevist. But to obtain any real idea of the battle between Right and Left, as it is reflected in the Press, one must, as already stressed, follow a number of other journals, a few of which are just as vigorous in the presentation of their points of view as are the two mentioned. An emphasis on this furious polemical note running through French journalism must in fairness be accompanied by an allusion to the *Revue de la Presse* that is one of its old established features. These extracts, culled with laudable impartiality from contemporaries of diverse political complexions, give readers some idea of what is being said and written outside their favoured journals.

The same political violence that characterises Paris papers is indulged in by the bulk of the provincial Press. The latter, indeed, is essentially a party Press, and it plays a preponderating rôle in Parliamentary elections. But here again, as in Paris, the important newspapers tend more and more to become *journaux d'information*. In the cities there are organs which, apart from their great political influence, are powerful

in their commercial stability. Commanding a big volume of advertising, they can afford a national news service equal to that which the Paris papers must give, whether self-supporting or not. But, while the French provincial is bound to follow his local papers, he has a traditional liking for some organ of the capital, and journals in the *Grande Presse* of Paris are always strongly in evidence in the departments. The citizen of Lille may declare that his *Écho du Nord* is as good as any Paris paper, and the citizen of Marseilles may assert—much more vigorously, naturally—that his *Petit Marseillais* is infinitely superior to anything produced in the capital; yet neither seems able to do without his favourite Paris daily.

This love of a Parisian paper by the French provincial explains the enormous circulation that *Le Petit Parisien* built up years ago throughout the departments. This paper formerly made the proud boast of having the largest circulation in the world. To-day its claim is amusingly modified; it declares that it is *le plus lu des journaux du monde entier*. How, possibly, could this be either confirmed or denied?

DICK TURPIN: FACT AND LEGEND.

BY DEREK HUDSON.

I.

*'Bold Turpin vunce, on Hounslow Heath,
His bold mare Bess bestrode—er;
Ven there he see'd the Bishop's coach
A-coming along the road—er.
So he gallops close to the 'orse's legs,
And he claps his head vithin;
And the Bishop says, "Sure as eggs is eggs,
This here's the bold Turpin!"'*

THUS sang Mr. Samuel Weller in Chapter XLIII of *Pickwick*—and most of us still share the Bishop's feelings of awe, and even of reluctant admiration. So far as the gentle art of highway robbery is concerned, we all believe—'sure as eggs is eggs'—that no one can hold a candle to 'bold Turpin'; and, though we admit that he may have been (strictly speaking) a scoundrel, we maintain, none the less, that he was a chivalrous and rather attractive scoundrel. The Turpin of history, however, was a very different person from the Turpin of legend—and the recent bi-centenary of his execution for horse-stealing 'at Welton in the County of York,' may provide some excuse for this attempt to correct a few illusions.

It may still come as a surprise to credulous persons to learn that there is no evidence whatever that Turpin possessed a mare called Black Bess, or that he ever rode from London to York in a day. There is, of course, no denying that he spent most of his life near London, and that he met his death at York—but this is the only possible reason for

connecting him with the exciting tale which Harrison Ainsworth, in his novel *Rookwood* (published in 1834), first planted in the nation's imagination. Again, there is no reason to doubt Turpin's skill as a rider, yet even the legends of his prodigious and much-illustrated jumping feats—the famous leap over the toll-gate, for instance, or over the donkey-cart which blocked his path—both owe their first appearances in print to Harrison Ainsworth.

The author wrote a preface to *Rookwood* in which he said that the hundred pages describing the famous ride were written 'in one day and one night'—not much longer than the ride itself was supposed to have taken—and he added, 'Well do I remember the fever into which I was thrown during the time of composition. My pen literally scoured over the pages. So thoroughly did I identify myself with the flying highwayman, that, once started, I found it impossible to halt.' He explained that he had selected Turpin as one of the chief characters of *Rookwood* because his father's stories of the highwayman had thrilled him as a boy; but he gave no historical references, and probably most of the details of the 'Ride' came out of his own head.

Not all of them, however. Mixed up with Ainsworth's romancing are certain genuine details of Turpin's life—such as that accidental shooting of his companion Tom King, which in *Rookwood* is made the reason for the dash to York. Moreover, it is reasonable to detect echoes from at least two historical episodes of the seventeenth century. For example, in *The History and Antiquities of the City of York*, an anonymous work published in 1785, we read :

'John Lepton of York, Esquire, Servant to King James, made himself remarkable for performing a Piece of Exercise so violent in its kind as not to be equalled before or since. For a considerable Wager he undertook to ride six Days

together betwixt York and London, being two hundred measured Miles, and performed it accordingly. He first set out from Aldersgate, May 20, 1606, and accomplished his Journey every day before it was dark . . .'

If this is true, Mr. Lepton's exploit must certainly not be left out of account: his was a strenuous performance, though of course there is nothing to show that he did not change his mount as much as he pleased.

Another case is still more impressive, and also better authenticated. There are grounds for believing that in 1676 the highwayman William Nevison (whom Charles II called 'Swift Nick'), having committed a robbery near Chatham at four o'clock in the morning, rode immediately northwards by way of Gravesend, Cambridge, and Fenny Stratford, and reached York on the same evening. He is said to have ridden the whole way on one mare—and, when he was later put on trial for the robbery, his alibi was accepted: as one account says, 'tho' the Witnesses swore positively to him, yet proving himself to have been on the *Bowling-Green* at York, before Sunset the same Day the Robbery was committed, neither Judge nor Jury would believe them.'

It is obvious that here we have tapped the source, either direct or indirect, of some of Harrison Ainsworth's material; for not only the idea of one mare being used for the whole ride, but also the episode of the bowling-green, are both included in *Rookwood*. Indeed, if anyone deserves the credit for the famous ride it is William Nevison, who has been appropriately called 'the Claude Duval of the North.' According to the *Records of York Castle*, he was a man 'of pleasing address, and of gentlemanly manners,' who 'gave away to the poor much of the money he took from the rich'—though nothing could save him from hanging on Knavesmire gallows on May 4, 1684.

To many people the denial of Turpin's right to Black Bess and the Ride to York may seem much the same as a denial that he ever lived at all—and it is true that one account of his adventures has suffered the indignity of being bound up (at the British Museum) in the same volume as 'Puss in Boots' and 'The Sleeping Beauty.' Yet there is really more substance to Dick Turpin than there is to other more deserving heroes, Robin Hood included. An historical Turpin certainly existed—though not a very inspiring one—and it is possible, with a little trouble, to piece together the rough outline of his life.

II.

Richard Turpin was born at Hempstead in Essex, where his father, John Turpin, a retired butcher, kept the 'Bell' public-house. 1705 is generally accepted as the year of his birth, though it is impossible to state this with any certainty.¹

We know little about the highwayman's childhood, though several imaginative reconstructions of it have been made as a warning to posterity. Here, for example, is the beginning of Chapter I of *The Schooldays of Dick Turpin* (published in 1889 'by the author of *Mat Marchmont's Schooldays*, *The Queen's Shilling*, *Cœur de Lion*, and other works') :

"Let me see, wife, how old is Dick—ten or eleven?" asked Mr. Jonathan Turpin, suddenly walking from his shop into the sitting-room behind it, wherein his good lady was engaged in making a jacket for his only son.

"Lawks, Turpin, how you do startle a body, coming so sudden like; but, strange to say, I was thinking of the very same thing myself. Why, he's ten come the twenty-second

¹ Turpin is supposed to have told the hangman before his execution that he was thirty-three. But the inscription on his coffin stated that he died at the age of twenty-eight.

of the next month, and was born on a Sunday at twenty-five minutes past three in the morning. Bless his dear little self."

There is no reason to suppose that this delightful domestic picture in any way falls short of the truth. So far as we know, Mr. and Mrs. Turpin did their utmost to make an honest man of 'his dear little self.' At an early age they apprenticed him to a butcher in Whitechapel, where (according to his own confession) he served five years 'very faithfully.'

Turpin's criminal career began at sixteen or seventeen, when he 'started on foot on the Highway' and secured a number of 'small booties' without being caught. His father heard rumours of what was going on, and made an effort to reform him by setting him up on his own as a butcher in one of the Essex villages not far from Hempstead (probably Thaxted). In the hope that he would settle down, he encouraged his son to find a wife; and with his approval Dick married a servant girl named Palmer, who came of a respectable family at East Ham.

Unfortunately the desired effect was not forthcoming, although Miss Palmer made a devoted wife and the couple soon had a child. Turpin was not a bad butcher (at his trial one of the witnesses exclaimed, 'I have bought a great many good joints of meat of him, upon my soul!')—but he found an honest life both dull and unprofitable, and took to stealing cattle to supplement his income. As he was an excellent horseman the transition to housebreaking and highway robbery followed naturally enough.

Before long Turpin was at the head of a gang whose brutality terrorised the whole of Essex. Its traditional exploits were related in several of those cheap pamphlets with grotesque engravings which circulated widely in early

Victorian days. One of the most notorious is the tale of an old lady at Loughton, who was roasted on her own kitchen fire until she disclosed the whereabouts of her valuables. There was nothing very chivalrous or romantic about Turpin's methods.

Turpin is supposed to have made the acquaintance of his colleague, Tom King, by holding him up on the highway like any other traveller. 'What, dog rob dog?' shouted King; 'come, Turpin, we are brothers! If you don't know me, I know you!' This was the beginning of a long partnership—during most of which the pair lived in a cave in Epping Forest, sallying forth only at night, and miraculously avoiding arrest.

One of the most entertaining stories about King and Turpin is the legend that they chanced to waylay 'Bonny Prince Charlie' while he was riding, alone and incognito, from London to Scotland before the start of the '45. It is, of course, an impossible invention—partly because the Prince undoubtedly landed in the Hebrides, and partly because by that time King and Turpin had both been dead for several years—but anyone who cares to turn to an anonymous publication called *The Prince of Highwaymen* (1882) will find an amusing description of the incident. From this we gather that the 'Young Pretender' defended himself so lustily against the highwaymen that they were only too pleased to call the fight off and shake hands. Whereupon a serious conversation ensued, in which the well-bred courtesy of King and Turpin must have come as a delightful surprise to the Prince:

"I consider you, as the descendant of the Stuarts, possess a far better right to the throne than any German family," said King gravely.

"That's just exactly it," said Turpin.

Eventually he invited them both to join him as soon as he had raised his standard (to which they replied : ' With all the pleasure in life '), placed rings on their hands, and galloped off to Scotland.

From what we know of Turpin's character, few of his genuine exploits can have been as romantic as this fictitious adventure. In fact, the only authentic episode concerning King and Turpin that has come down to us is the one which finally dissolved their partnership. On this occasion the pair were being hotly pursued when King, on the point of capture, begged Turpin for help ; Turpin turned and fired, hitting his companion in the thigh : the wounded King was captured and later hanged, while Turpin for the time being escaped. (N.B.—In Ainsworth's *Rookwood* the shot is immediately fatal ; King expires with the melodramatic cry, ' Oh ! my best friend—Turpin—I die by his hand ' ; and Turpin sets off immediately to ride to York.)

After King's death, the net was drawn round Turpin more closely than ever. He had the misfortune to add to his other achievements the crime of murder—the victim being a gentleman's servant, who seems also to have been something of an amateur detective. Turpin confessed to the York hangman that

' one Day, being very much tired, he laid himself down in the Thicket, and turned his Horse loose, having first taken off the Saddle ; when he wak'd, he went to search after his Horse, and meeting with Mr. Thompson's Servant, he enquir'd, if he had seen his Horse ? To which Thompson's man answer'd, *that he knew nothing of Turpin's Horse, but that he had found Turpin* ; and accordingly presented his Blunderbuss at Turpin, who instantly jumping behind a broad Oak, avoided the Shot, and immediately fired a Carbine at Thompson's Servant, and shot him dead on the

spot . . . This done, he withdrew to a Yew Tree hardby, where he concealed himself so closely, that though the Noise of Mr. Thompson's Man's Blunderbuss and his own Carbine had drawn together a great number of People about the Body, yet he continued undiscover'd two whole Days and one Night in the Tree . . .'

Thereafter the bandit's old haunts were watched; the secret cave was discovered empty; Epping Forest was regularly patrolled—but all to no purpose. Dick Turpin had completely disappeared.

At last a proclamation was issued. It contained a description of the criminal as having 'high, broad cheek bones, a short visage, narrowing down at the chin, and a face heavily pitted with small-pox.' Perhaps this is the most crushing of all the blows we must sustain in our search for the romantic Turpin !

III.

Two unrecorded years followed Turpin's successful flight from Essex. At the end of this period the attention of the authorities became suddenly focussed on a Mr. John Palmer, a gentleman horse-dealer and respected member of society at Welton, near Brough in Yorkshire. Mr. Palmer had only been living at Welton a few months, but he had earned a good name for himself in business: he was greeted amiably on the hunting field, and often joined his neighbours in shooting parties.

It was an unguarded outburst of temper which caused Mr. Palmer's downfall. Having had a poor day's sport, he came home for once in an uncontrollable, truculent mood, wantonly fired at a prize cock belonging to his landlord, and killed it. His friends were shocked, and one of them, Mr. Hall, told him 'it was a shame.' Far from apologising,

Mr. Palmer said ' he would shoot him, too, if he would wait till he loaded the gun.'

This was a very different Palmer from the one the honest Weltonians were used to, and they retired in alarm. A summons was served on the delinquent, and on October 6, 1738, a sullen Mr. Palmer rode by the side of the local Constable, Carey Gill, to the Petty Sessions at Beverley. To add insult to injury, he rode on a stolen horse, and stabled it during the Sessions at the ' Blue Bell ' Inn.

The horse was to prove his downfall, for it was recognised at the ' Blue Bell ' by its owner, Thomas Creasey ; and Mr. Creasey soon took his information to the proper quarter. Palmer, however, had already fallen into difficulties owing to his failure to find bail or sureties at the Sessions. Questioned further, he was obliged to admit that he had lived for a time at Long Sutton in Lincolnshire, and an enquiry in that county revealed as many as fifty people who were anxious to see him again—preferably in a cell. This cumulative weight of evidence gave the Beverley magistrates no alternative but to commit him for safe custody to York Castle.

Even then the obscure John Palmer might never have been identified as the notorious Dick Turpin (he had assumed his wife's maiden name) if it had not been for one rather curious circumstance. Turpin wrote from York Castle to his brother-in-law in Essex, asking him to provide him—somehow or other—with a good character. Failing to recognise the handwriting, his brother-in-law refused to pay the sixpence for delivery and returned the letter to the local post-office. Now it happened that James Smith, the post-master, had once been a teacher at Hempstead village school, where he had actually had the task of instructing young Turpin in the mysteries of the alphabet. As he turned the

missive over in his hands, the scrawl on the outside seemed very familiar ; and later, when he opened the letter in the presence of a magistrate, his suspicions were confirmed.

The following March, James Smith, accompanied by another Hempstead worthy, Edward Saward, travelled to York to give evidence against Turpin at the assizes. Before the trial, he went to see and identify his former pupil at the Castle. Turpin's attitude at this interview appears to have been a mixture of defiance and resignation. 'He did confess he knew me,' affirmed Smith, 'and said unto me two or three Times, *Let us bung our eyes in drink* ; and I drank with him.'

Although they fully realised that they had in their hands the most notorious criminal in the country, the York authorities seem also to have appreciated that, however bad a man is, he can only hang once, for they contented themselves with arraigning Turpin on the charge of stealing three horses from Thomas Creasey. Any doubt still existing in the minds of the public, however, must have vanished during the examination of the Essex postmaster :

'*Court to James Smith.* Do you know the Prisoner *Palmer* at the Bar ? Look at him, and tell what you know about him.

'*Smith.* Yes, I knew him at *Hempstead* in *Essex*, where he was born ; I knew him ever since he was a Child.

'*Counsel.* What is his Name ?

'*Smith.* *Richard Turpin* ; I knew his Father, and all his Relations, and he married one of my Father's Maids."¹

Edward Saward's evidence was equally conclusive—though he had a habit of saying 'Upon my Soul' at the end of each sentence, which greatly worried the judge.

¹ The official report of the trial was a popular favourite, and went through four editions in 1739.

The evidence of Creasey and others left no doubt that Turpin had stolen the horses, and the only explanation vouchsafed by the prisoner was that he had bought them from a man at Heckington, whose name he forgot.

After one desperate, but to us rather pathetic piece of quibbling, the trial was over :

'When the Judge was going to pass Sentence, the Prisoner was asked what Reasons he had to give why Sentence of Death should not be pronounced against him.

'*Pris.* It is very hard upon me, my Lord, because I was not prepar'd for my Defence.

'*Court.* Why was you not? You knew the time of the Assizes as well as any Person here.

'*Pris.* Several Persons who came to see me, assured me, that I should be removed to Essex, to be tried there; for which Reason I thought it needless to prepare Witnesses for my Defence here.

'*Court.* Whoever told you so were highly to blame; and as your Country have found you guilty of a Crime worthy of Death, it is my office to pronounce Sentence against you.'

IV.

The condemned man seems to have had little hope of a reprieve: he contented himself with writing to his father, asking him to do his best for him. What purports to be his father's reply is printed in the fourth edition of the 'Trial'; if genuine, it does him credit:

'*March 29, 1739.*

'DEAR CHILD,

'I received your Letter this Instant, with a great deal of Grief; according to your request, I have writ to your Brother John, and Madam Peck, to make what Intercession can be made to Col. Watson, in order to obtain Transporta-

tion for your Misfortune ; which had I 100£ I would freely part with it to do you good ; in the mean time my Prayers for you ; and for God's Sake, give your whole Mind to beg of God to pardon your many Transgressions, which the Thief upon the Cross received Pardon for at the last Hour, tho' a very great Offender. The Lord be your Comfort, and receive you into his eternal Kingdom.

'I am your Distress'd,
'yet loving Father,
'JOHN TURPIN.'

'HEMSTEAD.

'All our Loves to you, who are in much Grief to subscribe ourselves your distressed Brother and Sister, with Relations.'

The day before his execution Turpin hired five poor men to walk as mourners behind the cart which was to carry him to the gallows, and provided each of them with a black hatband and gloves. He made a lengthy confession to the hangman, and left a gold ring and two pairs of shoes and clogs to a married woman at Brough—his only testamentary disposition.

On the day itself, April 7, 1739, he appeared in 'a brand-new fustian frock and new pumps,' and behaved with remarkable confidence on the way to execution, bowing repeatedly to the crowd.

'As he mounted the Ladder,' says an account in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 'feeling his right Leg tremble, he stamp'd it down, and looking round about him with an unconcern'd Air, he spoke a few words to the Topsman, then threw himself off, and expir'd in five Minutes.'

This is all that we know of the historical Dick Turpin—and perhaps the best that can be said of him is that he did not lack courage. But death was only a beginning for

that other Turpin, who lives so securely on our nursery bookshelves.

A hundred years after the last scene at York the London ballad-singers had a song with these lines at the end of it :

*'Now Turpin is caught and tried and cast,
And for a game cock must die at last,
One hundred pounds when he did die,
He left Jack Ketch for a legacie.'*

The lines are very inaccurate—but, after all, what did that matter? Turpin had long outgrown his own unworthy personality. He had become the highwayman *par excellence* of legend—the man who could light a pipe at full gallop, or clear the *chevaux de frise* on Hornsey toll-gate—in fact, a symbol for all that is admirable in the worst of us.

Surely we may say, as Dogberry said in the play: 'O villain! thou wilt be condemned into everlasting redemption for this.'

CAMELS AND CAMELIERS.

BY MAJOR C. S. JARVIS.

THE coming of the camel to Egypt and the Middle East is wrapped in mystery and the evidence as to its existence there in early days is most contradictory. It is a remarkable fact that, though every bird, beast and fish that the ancient Egyptians knew is carved on the walls of their temples and tombs, the camel for some unexplained reason does not appear. The workmanship of these carvings and bas-reliefs is so perfect that not only is it possible to recognise varieties of antelope such as the oryx and addax, now unhappily extinct in Egyptian deserts, but also to determine the different species of wild duck that frequent the Nilotic marshes. This being the case, it is extraordinarily difficult to account for the omission of the camel and there is a common belief that this animal was not known in Egypt until Alexander the Great brought specimens there after his Eastern conquests.

On the other hand the camel is mentioned frequently in the book of Genesis and when the Pharaoh of that day made Abraham a bid for his wife, Sarah, he offered a large number of animals, including camels. It is a very dangerous thing for an ordinary man to attempt to put a date to Abraham's period, but if one says it was somewhere about 2000 B.C. one may escape an onslaught from antiquarians as one will not be much more than two or three hundred years out. This would tend to establish the fact that the camel must have been known in Egypt well before the days of Alexander the Great, and even if the scribe of Genesis happened to make an error in stating that camels formed a part of the

dowry offered by Pharaoh, the fact remains that the constant reference to the animal in other books of the Old Testament proves that they were known and used in Palestine in very early dynastic days. Palestine and Egypt have always been closely connected by trade and one imagines, therefore, that the camel traffic between the two countries across the Sinai desert was as general in the time of the Pharaohs as it is to-day.

The history of the camel it would seem must remain a mystery and judging from the disgruntled expression on the animal's face there is little hope of expecting enlightenment from him. The Arabs say that the camel wears the supercilious look on his face because there are a hundred different names for him in the Arabic language and that, though many men know ninety-nine of them, the camel himself is the only one that knows the hundredth. On the other hand this look of supreme contempt worn by the camel may be due to the fact that he knows every journalist who writes about him will sooner or later, to avoid reiteration, refer to him as 'the ship of the desert.'

The camel is a very queer beast and differs from other ruminants in many respects. He carries his store of fat in the form of an enormous hump on his back and by drawing on this reserve can exist on a starvation diet for weeks. He has several pockets in his stomach in which he can carry a supply of water to last him seven days or more, and it is the male of the species that comes in season and not the female. He has two toes with a large curved nail on each and these toes are joined together and surrounded by a round web of spongy flesh. In every way he is admirably adapted for the country in which he is found as his hump and his reserve of water enable him to perform journeys that would be out of the question with a horse or donkey. His feet

are suited for travelling over the soft sand of the desert, the loose gravel or the rocky outcrops. He can close his nostrils against the hot blast of the *simoon* or *khamzin* wind and he has a large round callosity on his chest and others on the knees of his forelegs and thighs of his hind legs which allow him to squat at ease whilst being loaded up.

The *hamla* or baggage camel can carry an enormous load and will march with it on his back for twelve hours a day at a steady rate of three miles an hour and, although he is always alluded to as a foolish brainless beast, he keeps his head in a tight corner. If the track starts to give way under his feet in a difficult rocky pass he carefully tests each foothold before he takes the next step ; he seldom if ever crashes his load up against a jutting rock ; and he is not given to sudden frights and shying like his superior in the animal world, the horse. This makes him of particular value as a beast of burden in war-time, for a column of camels can be shelled or bombed without the whole line giving way to panic and stampeding. A marked feature of the late war in Sinai and Palestine was the behaviour of the Egyptian Transport Corps when subjected to aeroplane bombs or long-range shells, for neither the animals nor the Egyptian drovers showed any concern at the loud explosions and flying splinters. There might have been a slight swaying of the long column where the actual burst occurred, but the remainder of the line continued its stolid plod forward, both camels and men looking straight ahead with phlegmatic calm.

The fast-trotting camel, the *hageen*, can do eight miles an hour all out, but the normal speed for marching is a shuffling jog-trot which is most comfortable when in the saddle, and which accounts for five miles an hour. Camel Corps when marching cover twenty-five to thirty miles a day on an ordinary trek, but if circumstances demand something better

forty or forty-five miles will not worry them unduly. Horse lovers who express a supreme contempt for the camel should bear in mind that it takes a very exceptional horse to cover forty miles a day for ten days at a stretch and yet almost any animal in any Camel Corps can accomplish this without any special training.

History appears to be very vague about the employment of Camel Corps by the Romans, Persians, Macedonians and other great Powers who concerned themselves with Eastern conquests some two thousand years ago. Cambyses, so Herodotus relates, was assisted by the Sinai Arabs when he crossed this desert to invade Egypt, and apparently they supplied him with a Camel Transport Corps carrying water. One hesitates rather to quote Herodotus as an authority as when he visited Egypt he apparently attracted all the purveyors of cock-and-bull stories for which the country is famous even to-day and one of the tall stories with which he was regaled was that the Arabs constructed a pipe-line made of animal skins from the river Corys in Arabia across the Sinai desert. As there is no river Corys or any other river in Arabia one may dismiss the story as fabulous like so many of Herodotus' statements, but it is a very extraordinary forecast of what was to be done in Sinai by Sir Archibald Murray in the year 1916 with 12-inch pipes instead of animal skins. There is, however, no mention of Cambyses mouting his men on the animals and forming a Camel Corps.

Some five hundred years later when Gallus invaded Arabia and marched as far south as the Yemen he was accompanied by one thousand Nabataeans, and these one feels sure must have been camelry for the Nabataeans, had a definite camel complex. Almost every suitable smooth rock within a two hundred mile radius of their home-town, Petra, has a

very well-humped camel scratched upon it and sometimes a rider apparently having a very rough ride. Underneath these rough drawings are inscriptions written in Nabataean characters which the author of this article is unable to translate, but which he feels convinced were the first century's Nabataean versions of the present-day soldier's 'Roll on Blighty and my seven years' or 'Nobby Clarke wishing he'd stuck to the P.B.I.' Unfortunately there is no authority for stating that Gallus formed an Imperial Camel Corps from some of his ten thousand infantry who plodded through the Arabian sands with an Arabian sun overhead. The Romans, however, were a race who always adapted themselves to circumstances and it is fairly safe to assume that volunteers from each cohort were called for, and, amid roars of laughter and gibes from the remainder of the soldiery, were mounted on these ungainly beasts to form possibly the first regular Camel Corps in history.

The account of Napoleon's adventure in Egypt gives some definite information of camelry, for when he started the march across the Sinai desert in 1799 in his attempt to reach Constantinople fifteen men from each battalion of infantry were selected to form a Camel Corps. This Corps accompanied the army as far as Acre acting as scouts and advance guard and retired with it when, after the failure to capture Acre, Napoleon returned to Egypt.

Among other records of this campaign is a picture of Napoleon on the camel he rode across the desert. It is probably an excellent portrait of the Emperor, but if Napoleon rode across Sinai and Palestine on the animal on which he is depicted one is not surprised that the campaign was a failure, for the camel is not a riding animal at all but a badly-bred baggage camel whose every step must have been torture to the man in the saddle. It is inconceivable that a

man of Napoleon's calibre should have allowed a camel of this description to be palmed off on him by the Arabs and one cannot imagine his staff allowing it to happen, for one of the first things a Camel Corps officer has to learn is that the selection of a first-class, easily-managed comfortable trotter for Commanders-in-Chief, Governors-General, and men of that ilk who come to inspect is all-important. No man with a bruised posterior and badly-shaken liver is going to write a good report or utter one word of approbation of the Corps responsible for the damage.

The Camel Corps so far as Egypt and the Sudan are concerned was first recognised officially and came into real existence when Sir Garnet Wolseley was despatched to the country to organise the expedition for the relief of Gordon in Khartum in 1884. This was the occasion when Wolseley caused the most terrible flutter in War Office dovecots and cavalry circles when he demanded a large camelry force of three regiments to be designated the Heavy, the Light and the Guards Camel Corps. To form these he asked for forty men and three officers from each of the Household and Heavy Cavalry regiments and the same number from each Light Cavalry regiment and each battalion of the Guards. It is said that the old Duke of Cambridge exploded with wrath and cavalry colonels held forth in every club and mess in the land on the insult offered to the mounted branch of the service. Dire disaster to the whole campaign was predicted if tradition was flouted to such an extent that horse soldiers were not only deprived of their beasts, but were subjected to the indignity of being mounted on the ugliest and most ungainly animal in existence, and some idea of the feeling aroused can be obtained by a perusal of the pictures in the *Punch* of those days.

Wolseley, however, had his own way and the composite

regiments of Camel Corps took part in the march of the famous desert column across the Bayuda desert to El Metemma where a small party embarked on river steamers, to arrive at Khartum two days too late. Wolseley's recognition of the value of Camel Corps, however, and their employment on one of the most difficult campaigns in the history of the Empire established the force as a very essential concomitant to all desert operations, and when the Sudan settled down to a long period of peace and prosperity after Kitchener's advance to Khartum the Sudan Camel Corps became the *corps d'élite* of the Egypto-Sudan Army, now the Sudan Defence Force. The men are recruited from Sudanese Arabs and from the negro races of the north and all the senior officers are seconded from the British Army. A Camel Corps force organised on the same lines exists in Somaliland, whilst in Egypt the Frontiers Camel Corps that keeps watch over the Libyan and Sinai Deserts was until recently officered by British regulars. In Trans-Jordan the Arab Legion has a strong detachment of camel police and for the southern areas of Palestine a similar formation exists.

India possesses the Bikanir Camel Corps in Rajputana and as the Bikanir camel is of the enormous shaggy type that hails from Central Asia, and not the light, breedy and leggy animal of Arabia and the Sudan, two men are mounted on one beast on saddles resembling horse saddles. These saddles are fitted with stirrup leathers and irons, which to the Arab is something unthinkable, and when during the war the Bikanirs came to Egypt for service in the deserts the Beduin sheikhs received a shock from which they have barely recovered. 'Stirrups for a horse we understand for those who require them, though every Beni Adam (son of man) should ride as well without, but stirrups for a camel ! Wallahi !'

The Arabs, however, learned that the Bikanir Rajputs, though they might require stirrups to their camel saddles, were nevertheless very redoubtable soldiers with whom no liberties could be taken, and their camels being of colossal size and strength their value for stud purposes could not be overlooked. For this reason small patrols of the Bikanir Camel Corps invariably received the warmest welcome at all Arab encampments during the war and the results of this happy *liaison* were evident during the next six or seven years when a strain of particularly strong weight-carrying camels was noticeable among the Libyan tribes. Some of the descendants are still to be seen to the amazement of experts who wonder how odd members of this Central Asian type have spread so far west as the borders of Cyrenaica and Tunis.

At the outbreak of the war in 1914 when Great Britain was faced with a campaign against the Turks in both Sinai and the Libyan Desert an Imperial Camel Corps was formed from British and Dominion troops. There was nothing new about this as Napoleon had done precisely the same thing a hundred odd years previously by calling for volunteers from his infantry, but Sir Archibald Murray found his men mostly from the mounted units : British Yeomanry, the Australian Light Horse and the New Zealanders. Eighteen companies of 160 men each were formed consisting of ten Australian, six British and two New Zealander ; and the I.C.C., as they were known owing to the British Army's addiction to initials, took a leading part in the two desert victories of Maghdaba and Rafa and were, to use Old Testament parlance, in the forefront of the battle when Chetwode's corps rolled up the Turkish left flank at Beersheba opening the road to Jerusalem.

Mounting a camel is not a particularly easy matter for

the inexperienced as the animal like the horse has the desire to move directly he feels the weight of the rider. With a horse this means that one has to jump along with one foot in the stirrup and the other on the ground ; with the camel it means that he comes up with a terrific lurch at the moment when the would-be rider is poised in the air above the saddle and the wooden pommel hits him a forceful punch in a most sensitive portion of his body. The mounting of the British ex-cavalrymen on their new steeds was the occasion for much pointed wit and scathing remarks on the part of their comrades who had elected to remain faithful to their horses. One can imagine that precisely the same pungent criticism was made by the rank and file when Napoleon mounted his men in Sinai, and if Gallus formed a Camel Corps in Arabia, as one likes to think, there is no doubt that the Roman legionaries greeted the occasion with the ribald mirth for which they were famous. How Kipling could have depicted the scene if the formation of a Roman Camel Corps had occurred to him !

The advantage that the Camel Corps has over other mounted units is that the individual soldier and his mount are self-contained for five days and at a pinch for seven, for the camel can carry on his back his rider with his rifle, rations and blankets, a five-gallon tank of water and five days' corn forage for himself. Add a few trotting baggage camels to the patrol and they are equipped for fourteen days provided there is one watering-place on the route taken.

The watering of camels, it may be mentioned, is a rather lengthy and exasperating business for when an animal only has one drink in five or seven days one cannot expect him to hurry over it. A section of forty camels taking aboard their water supply at a desert well suggests a gathering of retired Brigadiers and Colonels sitting over vintage port at a regi-

mental dinner, for after every drink the camel contemplates the scenery with that expression of supreme and silent contempt for which he is famous, and invariably decides to have 'the other half' at the moment when the bugle goes to saddle up again.

There are two types of saddle used for camel riding, if one eliminates the queer contrivance of the Bikanirs, and they are the Arab padded saddle with its two pommels which fits over the hump and is shaped somewhat like a donkey saddle, and the Sudanese *makhloufa* that resembles the seat of a comfortable office chair. It consists of a hide thong and hardwood cradle with a pommel in front and behind, and on a thick pad consisting of his blankets the rider sits at ease with his legs draped round the front pommel. The hardy Arab regards the *makhloufa* as a concession to ease and comfort and he feels the greatest contempt for it, pretending that it is quite impossible to ride a camel properly from this insecure seat. In Sinai in my days there was a long-standing controversy between the Arab Police and the Sudanese Camel Corps as to the respective merits of their saddles and I have heard them arguing whilst on the march with an exchange of sharp-edged pleasantries. I favoured the *makhloufa* personally on account of its comfort, and the Camel Corps school of thought as to saddles was therefore in the ascendancy until one day Lord Lloyd, then High Commissioner, came on patrol with us. He was given the finest riding camel in the Camel Corps complete with *makhloufa* draped with a huge black *farwah* (lamb-skin rug), but we had overlooked the fact that Lord Lloyd had served with Lawrence in Arabia where the Arab saddle only was used. With the same look of contempt on his face that the Beduin habitually wore when looking at it he had the *makhloufa* removed and a saddle substituted which caused a sudden

and unprecedented slump in Camel Corps stock. If a High Commissioner does not know the correct type of saddle to use, who does?

It is the fashion in this mechanical age to say that the days of the Camel Corps are over and that the work they used to perform can be carried out now more expeditiously and economically by patrol cars. The same has been said so often of the cavalry but when the Royal Dragoons, then in process of mechanization, were ordered to Palestine last year it was stipulated they should go as a mounted unit. As a mounted unit they have been operating ever since in the Holy Land in broken rocky country over which cars cannot travel and over which they never will travel whatever improvement are made to their wheels, tyres and interior construction.

In 1936 when there was a scare of war with Italy over the Abyssinian question I was asked to watch some thirty miles of coast south of Suez with a view to preventing a possible landing of arms by night. The Desert Car Patrols were instructed to carry this out and at once gave a very practical demonstration of the fact that there are some things that mechanized units cannot do and which mounted men can perform with ease.

The country on the Sinai side of the Gulf of Suez is sandy, broken and very rocky, and in seven days half the cars of the patrol were out of action owing to mechanical breakdown. The consumption of petrol was enormous, but what rendered the whole proceeding a farce was the fact that the cars could only travel with their head-lamps on. In other words the car patrols were advertising their every movement by brilliant lights visible for five miles or more, and I can think of no device that could render greater assistance to a small landing party desirous of putting a consignment of arms

ashore than head-lamps indicating the position of watching patrols.

There is of course a vast amount of desert country which in days past was the special preserve of the Camel Corps, but which can now be negotiated more effectively by car. The desert, however, is not all sand and gravel ; much of it is rocky hills, sudden scarps and boulder-strewn water courses, and here the mechanized force will never be able to function but the camels can take it in their stride. They will move through it with consummate ease with armed men on their backs, or if it is a question of maintaining supplies of rations or ammunition to outlying posts strings of baggage camels will carry this out with the same efficiency and despatch as they did in the late war. The camel, like the horse, has proved his worth through some five thousand years of history and his day is not over yet.

JANE THACKERAY, OF CAMBRIDGE (1788-1810).

BY ISABELLA BAYNE-POWELL.

JANE TOWNLEY THACKERAY, who was born on November 3, 1788, was a granddaughter of Dr. Thomas Thackeray, the famous head master of Harrow. She was also a cousin of William Makepeace Thackeray. Her father, another Thomas Thackeray, lived at Cambridge, where he enjoyed a great reputation as a surgeon. He occupied a large house which had been left him by a friend, and out of gratitude to him Thackeray conceived the happy idea of putting his likeness in stained glass into the centre of the staircase window. The house was, no doubt, a very welcome gift, for old Dr. Thackeray, the father of sixteen children, had only been able to leave Thomas £300, and he had to rely on what he earned to support a family of fifteen of whom Jane was the youngest. Mrs. Thackeray, at the time of Jane's birth, was fifty-one, but in spite of her vast family she lived to be ninety-three. She was fortunately an excellent manager and a very good needlewoman. She bought sufficient groceries to last for the year at the famous Stourbridge Fair, which was held near Cambridge every September. With the help of her servants and later of her elder daughters, she made all the children's clothes and household linen at home, and when her eldest son went to India she made six dozen shirts for him.

Jane had as her godfather the Duke of Newcastle, a nephew of the great Whig duke, who happened to call upon Thackeray a few days after she was born. He took her in his arms and offered to become her sponsor, remarking candidly, 'I can't

afford to give her anything, but when she marries I will give her husband a place.' This amiable promise was never fulfilled, for the duke died a few years later.

Jane, coming at the tail end of a long family, had few young companions to play with, but her childhood seems to have been happy despite a tendency on the part of her elder brothers and sisters to give her much good advice. One of her earliest recollections was standing at the window of her father's house and watching the soldiers march by on their way to quell the Bread Riots at Ely. At a later date she was taken to visit a brother at Eton, and Dr. Goodall, the provost, who was a connection of the family, took her into his garden and fed her on strawberries so that she might always remember the 4th of June. On this visit she saw King George III come out of St. George's Chapel, and was cruelly disappointed to find him dressed soberly in 'top boots, leather breeches, and a blue coat with red cuffs and collar.'

Jane, however, had one very agreeable recollection of royalty. Her family had met Prince William Frederick, afterwards Duke of Gloucester, when he had been an undergraduate at Cambridge. A few years later he came up for Commencement, which then corresponded to the Oxford Commemoration and was held in July at the end of the Midsummer term. Mrs. Thackeray, among many other visitors, went to Trinity Lodge to call upon him. He inquired for Jane, and on hearing that she and a little cousin were waiting in Great Court for Mrs. Thackeray, he cut two slices of cake which he wrapped in paper and had sent them. Jane was too young to remember the time when the Prince first came up to Cambridge as a boy of twelve, but her mother often told her how she and her husband were invited one Sunday evening to meet him at tea at Jesus

Lodge. They were unable to go and afterwards were very glad, for the company to amuse the young prince played blind man's buff. The whole University was scandalised at such a desecration of the Sabbath.

When she was twelve she was sent to school at Hackney, which was then a pleasant rural suburb of London. Her brother Frederic, who of all the family seems to have been most fond of giving advice, wrote to her, saying, 'you must consider your governess as your mother and your school-fellows as your sisters, conciliating the affections of the one, and implicitly obeying the orders of the other, for her orders can have no other object than your welfare.' As regards her governess, at any rate, Jane must have found it hard to follow her brother's advice, for the lady was eccentric and in a fit of temper cut off Jane's lovely brown hair. The monotony of life at school was broken by half-yearly visits to London where she stayed with an aunt, whose husband, Major Rennel, had a large and interesting circle of friends. It was his custom to drink chocolate at one o'clock when friends were always welcome. Little Jane thus met such eminent men as Mungo Park and Sir Joseph Banks, but what probably interested her far more was being taken to see the grand illuminations for the Peace of Amiens. After this, it is not surprising to learn that on her return to school she cried for three days so bitterly did she regret London.

In the Christmas of 1804 she left school with little regret and set off on a tour of visits. She now found it was an advantage to be the youngest of fifteen, for most of her brothers and sisters had homes of their own and she was able to spend much of her time during the next few years visiting them. She was carefully chaperoned on all her journeys, and at the beginning of the tour her mother went

with her as far as Rugby, where she was met by her brother, William, who took her to his home at Chester. Many of the county families of North Wales moved into Chester for winter residence, and it was the centre of much gaiety. The food, rather than the balls, seems to have impressed itself on Jane's young mind. A whole codfish was often served at a party, and a pheasant always appeared at table complete with head and tail, and its finest feathers were gummed round the edge of the dish. Then there was a delicious sweet made with three quarts of cream, and a hen with all her chickens round her made in flummery, which in Cheshire was the prepared skin of oatmeal mixed with honey, ale or milk. In the circumstances, however, it was more probably a kind of blancmange.

She left these delights in September when she went to join her brother Martin who was staying with friends at Denbigh. Life there was much quieter than at Chester, but it was not without incident. There was an eccentric gentleman living in the town who, as a tribute to his dead wife, had had his house painted black and ornamented with several bleeding hearts. On catching sight of Jane at her bedroom window one morning when he was out walking, he exclaimed, 'It is the East and Juliet is the sun.' 'I need not add,' she says, 'that he was half deranged,' but perhaps on this occasion he was not so deranged as she supposed, for at sixteen she was already remarkably pretty. While she was at Denbigh she was taken to see Mrs. Piozzi, formerly Mrs. Thrale, Dr. Johnson's great friend. Jane does not seem to have been greatly impressed by her, although Mrs. Piozzi in parting kissed her so that she might boast of this distinction to her family and friends. Jane remarks with obvious disapproval that 'her petticoats were very short showing her white stockings and high-heeled shoes.'

At the end of six weeks her brother Martin escorted her to Cambridge which they reached in time for the illuminations in honour of Trafalgar. The whole town turned out to see the sights, but poor Jane was obliged to stay at home, for tiresome brother Frederic disapproved of young ladies walking in the streets on such occasions. She was, however, allowed to come out at one of the County Balls held at Cambridge and wore a simple dress of Indian muslin.

She soon left Cambridge for Bath to visit another brother, and she broke her journey in London where she stayed with her aunt, Mrs. Rennel, an ardent Tory who was much grieved at the death of Mr. Pitt which occurred just then. His death made little impression on Jane who was impatiently looking forward to her stay at Bath. The season there was very gay, but it is disappointing to learn that Jane, unlike Miss Austen's heroines, never danced at any of the subscription balls held at the Upper and Lower Rooms, for her elders, and surely they must have been very hard-hearted, did not think it proper for her to take part in dances, which were so much used for the purposes of matchmaking. She seems to have got great pleasure out of watching the dancing and would often arrive at the Rooms early, before more than two or three candles were lighted, so that she might obtain a good seat at the bottom of the room where the best dancers always stood. The dances ended early. Punctually at eleven the Master of the Ceremonies held up his watch and the musicians at this signal stopped playing even if they were in the middle of a dance. Most people came to the balls in sedans, but on fine nights they often walked. Jane had other amusements. There were concerts where she heard Bartleman and Mrs. Salmon sing. She was constantly asked to card-parties where it was customary for the players to place the price of the cards

under the candlesticks for the butler. The servants were expected to provide new packs of cards for each party.

The death of her father, which was followed by a long period of mourning, put an end to all public amusements, but in July of 1808 she was at Cambridge for Commencement and took part in the festivities. No objection was raised to her dancing, and her brother Frederic so far forgot himself as to introduce Lord Palmerston, with whom she danced. No doubt, Lord Palmerston enjoyed the dance for Jane, who was nearly twenty, was very lovely, and she must have looked charming in a dress of 'white muslin, embroidered down the front and round the bottom, over pink, a round white chip hat encircled by a wreath of small pink roses, which passed over one side of the brim and under the other which was turned up a little.'

Life at Cambridge was very pleasant, but in August she was once more on the move and went with her sister, Mrs. Stevenson, to Harrogate. The journey from Cambridge lasted five days. At Harrogate she stayed at the Granby, the best house in the town, which was known on account of its aristocratic clientele as 'The House of Lords.' 'It was no unusual sight,' Jane remarks, 'to see six four in hands standing at the door.' She seems to have enjoyed Harrogate, although she was again not allowed to take part in any of the subscription balls. There was much card-playing among the older people, and one old Irish lady scandalised the more devout by playing whist on Sunday, though she wisely did so behind drawn blinds.

The season at Harrogate ended at the Doncaster Races in October, when Jane went to stay with her brother at Chester for the winter. The journey took four days although the distance was not more than a hundred miles. There were many Christmas dances at Chester, but her pleasure in them

seems to have been a little spoilt by being obliged to wear two dresses, not of her own choosing, which had been sent to her from Liverpool. They were elaborate and highly fashionable, but she disliked them extremely, although they probably compared favourably with the dresses of Sir Foster Cunliffe's two daughters who wore 'white muslin trimmed with real ivy leaves and wreaths of ivy in their hair.'

In April, 1809, she started off to visit yet another brother who lived in Ireland, where he had been presented with a living at Dundalk near Dublin. She was escorted to Ireland by friends and sailed from Liverpool, where she stayed the night with a friend of her sister-in-law who had recently been married. She complained bitterly to Jane how much she had been made to suffer by the curious Liverpool custom, which demanded that two groomsmen and two bridesmaids should accompany the bridal couple on their wedding tour.

At Dublin Jane was met by her brother and, after spending a few days there, they went on to Dundalk. Shortly after her arrival a Confirmation service was held by the primate of Ireland. Jane at the mature age of twenty was confirmed at this service, for so infrequent were confirmations in England at that time that no opportunity had occurred before, although she remarks, 'I had often previously received the sacrament.' At the ceremony she was startled by the chaplain seizing upon her and leading her to the left of the altar, where she would be the first to be received by the Archbishop, remarking as he did so 'the first person on whom the Archbishop lays his hands will be married before the year is out.'

Her brother then took her with his wife for a tour of Ireland, and Jane, unused to the warmth of Irish hospitality, was embarrassed by the casual way in which they would

arrive unannounced at a friend's house and stay there for a night or two. On one occasion, learning that the daughter of the house had died two or three days ago, Jane not unnaturally supposed that a visit would be inopportune, but her brother assured her that it would make no difference, and they arrived to find a huge party returned from the funeral. They were most heartily welcomed, however, and just had time to dress for dinner to which all the mourners stayed. Before the funeral anyone, who called to condole, was taken upstairs to see the body which lay in a room where, in honour of the dead, the curtain of the bed and the windows were looped up with rosettes of black and white ribbons.

Altogether Jane found Ireland a surprising country and perhaps she was not very sorry to get back to England early in 1810. Another brother still remained and after a visit to Chester and London she went to stay with him at Hatfield, where he had recently been appointed curate. Richard seems to have been a man of character. On the first Sunday when he took service at Hatfield he was told by the clerk that he must wait until such a time as Lord Salisbury and his family should choose to appear. Richard replied, 'In the House of God I wait for nobody,' and started punctually although the Salisbury family did not arrive for another ten minutes. He does not seem to have suffered at all from his independence. Lord Salisbury respected him for it, and in the course of a long life, finally brought to an end by an attack of 'spontaneous Asiatic cholera,' he was left £10,000 in legacies by various friends and relations.

Lord Salisbury showed much kindness to Jane while she was staying with her brother. She was asked to dine at Hatfield and was shown over the house with its twenty-nine staircases. Lord Salisbury had a fine collection of amber and other jewels, and he presented Jane with a beautiful

piece of unset amber 'shaped like a heart and also a clasp for a waist band, composed of three small antique gems set in gold.' Fortunately there was no brother Frederic at hand to suggest that it would be indelicate to accept such a valuable present.

It was when she was about to leave Hatfield for a visit to her brother at Bath in the autumn of 1810 that she received a proposal of marriage from George Pryme. He was a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and later became a member of parliament for the University, and the first professor of economics ever to be appointed at Cambridge. In the Combination Room at Trinity it was customary to toast the beauties of Cambridge and the neighbourhood, and Pryme was so impressed by the fact that Jane's name was never mentioned, although she excelled everyone in beauty, that he formed a very great respect for the modesty of her behaviour. His feelings for her soon became much warmer, and with the full consent of her mother he pressed his suit. Jane says little about their courtship, but in the words of her daughter it was characterised 'by respect on the lover's part and maidenly reserve on the young lady's.' It took a leisurely course and they were not married until 1813. Jane disliked the idea of a large wedding and only her mother and brother Frederic, who gave her away, came with her to the church, but one cannot doubt that she made a lovely bride in 'a plain white India muslin dress, a white figured silk scarf, and a white bonnet, no bigger than a cap, over which was thrown a white veil.' When she went away she put on 'a lilac silk cloak, a black veil, and a pair of coloured gloves.' And so they set off for London and then on to Brighton and Worthing, which were both more romantic places for a honeymoon than they are at the present day.

THE JIGGLING PEI-WEI TRAIL.

BY HAROLD BALDWIN.

WHAT a pity it is that so many old trails, faithful servants of yesterday, should fade from the western scene, unwept, unhonoured and unmarked. Yet shreds of these romantic old highways weave in and out of a few unexploited areas. On this homestead we still use about three hundred yards of an historic trail. Its age is testified by the ancient musket picked up along its windings. Indeed, there can be little doubt that this—apparently endless—ribbon of trail was used by some of Prince Rupert's pioneer 'gentlemen-adventurers.' Where it began nobody seems to know. Where it ended, and still probably has a visible end, nobody seems able to tell us. We do know that its countless twists must straighten out somewhere by a deserted post on the 'Bay.'

In and out, sometimes almost doubling back upon itself, we can never forget the Pei-Wei trail those first few years we got to hate it—yet love it fiercely. It seemed endless when we trudged along it on nights when the thickets cracked and clicked as grim frost imposed its cold-steel will upon the world. But how beautiful were those nights when the frost noises, the scream of sled runners, the breathing and snorting of the horses, were the only sounds to break the awesome silence. A man felt puny, yet somehow magnificent, in that magnificent loneliness. In these kaleidoscopic days we can only dream of the occasional, but absorbingly interesting, traffic which, twenty years ago, meandered through the dense bush via the Pei-Wei trail. It is hard to believe that children born in the far-flung shacks

along the old trail now career along the six-year-old highway, which doomed the old trail to oblivion and almost obliteration, in trucks and automobiles. Drought-stricken prairie farmers poured along the new highway for several years. They know nothing of the old trail. Caterpillar tractors now hasten the vanishing spruce logs to railheads along railways through country we hunted and explored. The rapacious lumbermen have left their usual mark upon the country, ugly slash, stumps a-rot, weed-tressed sawdust mountains, noisome slabs which once were the bark and sap-wood of their victims. Following them, like a coyote band after an abandoned, mortally wounded moose, came the 'haywire' sawmills. What the big hunters have left these industrial jackals devour. With civilisation come weeds, roads, droughts, relief officers. To civilisation the huge trucks thunder, laden each year with inferior lumber to the year before. Our children skim out to the cities at fifty miles an hour. No one rips up the old trail with more enthusiasm than the bairns mothers bore under such trying conditions twenty-odd years ago.

We have tried to find out what Pei-Wei means. Local folk spell it Pee-Wee. Zachary Hamilton, the Regina authority on Saskatchewan history and Saskatchewan Indians, believes it is a corruption of a Cree phrase for 'the blizzardy or misty' trail. 'Old timers' swear it means 'Little' trail; just as pee-wee golf describes miniature golf. Anyone who traversed its windings inclined to believe the old timers' translation. Nothing wider than a sleigh or a dog-sled could jingle or shuffle through. We did not widen it any more than we were obliged. None but our most intrepid creditors forced their way to us through its mud, which quivered over its surface from April to October, when frost paved it with iron for its season of greatest usefulness.

In summer we cursed it, mud and all, when mosquitoes arose from wet pea-vines, shoulder high, twanging their bloodthirsty anticipation. Loons on uncharted lakes hardby its windings raised the hair of the tenderfoot with their maniacal shrieks. The bawl of a calf, born to some half-wild range cow of the two herds roaming the square leagues of scrub, only accentuated the impression of settlement and civilisation as being things apart from us. Crunching along it on moccasined feet in January we often stopped, awed by the soul-woe of a brush wolf ululating over the wastes of forest, repeating and repeating, from swale to swale, from ridge to ridge.

Exploration was our delight in those days. Every jiggle, every writhing of the narrow trail held uncertainties; the thrill of 'No Man's Land' after nightfall without the stench, the wire or the danger. On a raw-boned old cow-horse, renowned for his endurance and gait and notorious for his ugliness and scheming brain—for if ever horse had intellect old Charlie had—we jogged northward to call on Hermann, the burly German and Art, the slim Norwegian, who fed their cattle on the wild hay which grew in countless tons by the Pei-Wei lakes.

It was in that merciless winter of 1919-20, when the country 'froze up' in early October, and snow stayed with us till early May, that hæmorrhagic septicæmia struck at their fattest stock. The boys did not recover from their losses for years.

And so many kine died of starvation that winter. New settlers, soldiers just demobilised, drove in their herds. Ordinarily they would have had sufficient time to stack enough hay to feed their stock twice over, but winter arrived six weeks too early in 1919. Wild hay froze to nutritionless fuzz before being blanketed with a hopeless depth of snow.

Now and then a hantle of these existing skeletons of hair and bone would lay down to die, one by one, along the old trail, which they had followed in an endeavour to pick up a mouthful of straw, hay or oats left by a passing load on the twigs by the trail side, or by some dead campfire. Sometimes these famished creatures broke into stacks despite the protecting fences. Too often in their frenzy they spoiled and trampled more than they consumed. Many bloated and died on the very top of the hay they had found too late. The irony was, that Hermann and Art, with ample feed, lost their primest beasts with the accursed hæmorrhage. Fat beeves would bleed at the nose, stagger, twirl about once or twice, then fall and die. To ease their heavy hearts the two ranchers would hurtle down the Pei-Wei trail, four horses laying their bellies to the snow ruts, runners screaming, harness and bells jangling, to the home of Bob Forbes, a fellow rancher and pioneer, where fiddle and feast, quadrilles and round dances, with our few and much-sought after ladies, passed the long hours of darkness away. Usually these 'hoedowns' began about eight o'clock in the evening and ended with breakfast and daylight. Bob Forbes' log fortress of a house would hold us all comfortably twenty years ago. Since the Pei-Wei trail disappeared quietly, as all discarded, faithful servants generally do, a community hall of mammoth dimensions shouldered the bush away. It holds scarce half of the polyglot community, immigrants from half the nations of the old world and new, today.

Back from 'Hermann and Art' we used to scud, for old Charlie could go when he wanted to, which was generally when he was headed for home. Often, in spring, his hooves faintly drumming on the soft terrain seemed to keep time with the drumming of partridges—really ruffed grouse—

which, like a fleet of motor-cycles for ever starting, sputtering and dying, thrummed ceaselessly for weeks.

Charlie always snorted and quivered when we sometimes made our way to the peculiar clearing, which in the fall, when we rode forth to drink in the gorgeous colours with the eyes, and the sweet—now insectless—air into our lungs, showed the skeletons of bison blanched and stark. Did the humped shouldered patriarchs of the herd go there to die? Or did hunters leave their kill? Charlie hated the place. It certainly was eerie—then. They are boring for oil there this year of 1938. Not a bone remains. Old Charlie—he must be almost thirty years old—trots sedately in front of a bevy of school-children now; Charlie who slammed the front end of a sleigh to flinders the first time we put harness on his outraged, quivering back and hooked him, with a civilised horse as mate, to the sled eveners. The parents of those kiddies neither knew nor care that the Pei-Wei trail ever existed.

In its hey-day we used to sit at the door of the log shanty to listen to the shi-pokes—the Saskatchewan herons—pumping their queer song in the flags of the lakes, strung out one after another, roughly parallel to the trail. Our pipe purring sweetly we have watched the prairie chickens chuckle, boom and bow in their spring dance. The squaws would smell the good tobacco. Out from the scrub they waddled. A few words of doubtful Cree sent them into fits of laughter. They laughed with delight and rubbed their bellies in honest delight when we brewed strong tea, amply sugared it and handed it out by the mugfuls. Cube sugar filled them with gastronomic ecstasy. Suddenly, without a word, they would leave and waddle away to their tents by Morgan or Indian Lakes, where their papooses shrieked and laughed and tobogganed on their backsides

down the steepest part of the lake bank. Smoke spiralled up from the rusty stove-pipes jutting in unseemly disrepair from the tent flap opening, or from the disreputable marquee of old George Gilbert, the leader of the band, old George with his sun glasses, his false teeth ; his mother of many years over the hundred mark sucking in vast content at her huge-bowled pipe with an amber mouthpiece as thick as our thumbs. Sometimes old George came to sit and converse. We said nothing at all but our pipes pup-pupped in unison. Speech was superfluous. 'Night,' he would grunt at last.

No man could wish for kinder neighbours than old George's band. 'Pop' they called us. Perhaps it was the nearest they could get to the nickname 'Bob.' They never allowed us to be without meat for years. Moccasins, bead-work ; anything they thought we needed they supplied with solemn grunts of utter good will.

They come no more. Old George and Nipitin his grandson appear now and then to see that we are all right, but the band we never see. It is as well. They do not belong to modern roads, automobiles, lumber trucks, and tractors raping their hunting grounds.

Vanished, too, are some of the stalwart fellows who trudged north to the Red Deer or White Bear lumber camps. Several of them have become successful farmers on lands they picked out for themselves in the fine black soil thirty miles to the south. Those lads hurled many a 'rear-dry' stick to the floods again ; burlled many a log in 'white water' or 'blowed'er clear' when 'them there sticks jammed tighern' a bull's tail in flytime.'

There was Henry Argue with his range-bull roar, unhappy to-day because no 'sticks' come down, though his farm is good and prosperous. There were the Hendren boys,

wiry, spare fellows, active as wildcats, fearless, masters of the rude rough-and-tumble combats of woodsmen ; experts at the dangerous sports of the lumberjack. Bob Forbes, my staid and good neighbour, who can, when the humour is on him, spin unusually good yarns in verse of his comrades of the Red River drive. Huge Lafe Hagen and others of his tall Scandinavian race.

They used to wave as they swung along the old trail, sometimes taking a fallen tree in their stride with jumps that no cat would be ashamed of. Sometimes, if they had circulated—as was sometimes their wont—a jug of strong waters before ‘headin’ north’ they would roar out a ditty for our entertainment. Great lads ! They roll forth in their might no more. But, even yet, Pat Hendren at fifty will leap out to show the younger generation how they’d ‘uster burl ’em.’

Pat and Bob and Henry and all of them called their resonant warning of ‘timber’ up in the Red Deer or White Bear when the rest of us hauled and freighted along the old trail. Dog teams passed us, swerving grandly to give us our share of the narrow cleft in the ‘scrub.’ Horses snorted, dogs whined softly, snarled or barked savagely. Mush ! Gee ! Hi there ! Horse and dog, toboggan, carry-all and tump pack, along the Pei-Wei trail. Somehow, thinking of those days we get restless, fed up with comfort, short distances, neighbours, radio, automobiles, stores.

We used to know everybody in a hundred-mile radius. We are practically unknown to the newcomers of the last ten years. Some of us have prospered. Consequently the old timers meet but rarely. Material success is about all that counts in a frontier community of yesterday. Old trails are not the only worthwhile things that have disappeared. We grouched at the Pei-Wei trail, its inordinate

length, its windings, its hardships. Blessings too often are appreciated when they are no more.

And the sight of mounted policemen careering along the new roads in dazzling automobiles serve but to remind us of their predecessors who passed the night with us and looked the other way when we hauled the moose haunch out of the cellar. Those old-time mounties knew that law could not always be observed to the letter in districts where the nearest store was sixty miles away, the beef herd ranging miles away, and no mountie expected.

Even the pelicans do not wheel in the flawless skies of early fall as they did. Wheeling, turning, majestic in flight, we used to watch them rapturously.

It is strange, indeed, how the hardship of war or trail is dimmer in the memory than the grim, snatched joys. Mosquitoes, pitiless frost with forty miles ahead and darkness coming on, with only the mysterious northern lights to flicker and fool us into imagining they crackle. Green, yellow, pink, crystals, lances of fire, always changing, they lit the clicking bush eerily.

Radio, roads, good friends not a quarter of a mile away, cannot efface the love for the old trail. A home in which a lady presides, all the things a common man could reasonably ask, cannot altogether down the lilt and hard song of the Pei-Wei trail. It is a song subdued, but, like the silence of the wild, it drums on the ears. The ghostly tamaracs, slender wraiths of the muskegs, have disappeared too. The mysterious, lovely muskegs are being burnt sheer to their clay containers by settlers who crave hay more than cranberries, a never-failing water supply, blue-berries, peat, and the innumerable raw materials hidden in their moss. As a ghost mourning silently over its incarnation the white mist rolls up each evening to show us where the muskegs lay.

All that remains of the old life, the traffic of the Pei-Wei trail, the occasional—always disturbing but thoroughly beloved—mountie, the trapper with his pack supported by tump-line across his sun-seared forehead ; George Gilbert with his band, his mongrel dog teams, his days of regalia ; the jingling tote team bringing in the three weeks late groceries on screaming sleighs. For every one a jorum of scalding 'sergeant-major's' tea ; the sizzling meat in the pan ; the feeling of completeness with the good tobacco after the meal, the freedom, the oneness—they shall never die while my three hundred yards of the old trail remain, and remain they will though the earth fall apart !

High Tor, Saskatchewan.

THE OLD CLIPPER.

*Forlorn in some forgotten creek she lies
where London river winds its crowded way,
finest of clippers, rotting to decay,
empty to tyrannous winds and rainy skies.
Lost are her lovely lines, her shapely hull,
her towering slender masts, the green and red
that blazed upon her stately figurehead.
Here is her end, that was so beautiful.
Yet ever in her fading memory stands
some haunting vision of her queenly state,
of windswept voyaging by sunlit strands,
of China seas, and Indian isle and strait ;
still she bears home the spoils of foreign lands,
of Valparaiso and the Golden Gate.*

L. C. BROMLEY.

THE PLAINS OF MYSTERY.

BY C. T. STONEHAM.

JEFF HERON came to the place that was called the Pool of the Lizards two hours before sundown. Staring at the grey water, glistening in the evening light, he thought it eerie. The setting helped this impression, for the N'jiri Plain is a sandy, desolate expanse wherein the heavens are frequently obscured by a strange mist so that the full light of the tropical sun is diminished to an uncanny glare, as if some cataclysm impended. It was a fitting scene for the tragedy which had occurred here.

'Is this the place?' asked Jeff, without turning to look at the gaunt Swahili headman standing behind him.

'It is the place,' said Abdi. He pointed to a grove of acacias on a ridge fifty yards distant. 'The Bwana N'guvu lies there.'

'Let them pitch camp on that side.' Jeff indicated a flat piece of sward beyond the pool.

He walked up to the grove to find his brother's grave. There was a peculiar hush over the veld; francolins and guineafowls had not begun their evening calls and as yet there was no sound of frogs. Jeff found the mound of earth with rocks piled there to frustrate the hyenas. The acacia boughs bent motionless above the wilderness grave; a grey monkey crouched on a limb watching the man with bright, fierce eyes, resenting his intrusion.

Jeff took out his pipe and filled it mechanically. He was deeply moved, and therefore his expression and actions were more casual than usual. 'Well, Jack, so they got you at

last !' he mused aloud. 'They' were the inscrutable gods of the wilderness, and their instrument had been a large tawny-maned lion with a lame foot.

Abdi had got the whole story from the frightened Masai boy who had been Jack Heron's only companion on his last hunt. Jack's camp had been ten miles away on another water-hole ; he had set out, with the Masai for guide, to explore this part. Among the bushes by the pool Mubi the old cattle-killer had leapt upon him suddenly and bitten him across the head. The native, true to the traditions of his tribe, ran upon the transgressor with his spear, but the lion did not wait. Purposelessly he had killed and now he made off, as if shocked by his crime. When Abdi and the others were brought to the scene vultures were already struggling to get at Jack Heron's body through the branches the Masai had thrown over him.

Jeff and his brother had been the best of friends, seldom parted throughout many years of hunting, prospecting, and trading, from Livingstone to Nairobi, and far wide of that line. Pondering in that silent grove on the ridge, Jeff wondered at the impulse which had made him rush off to the new gold-strike at Kakamega despite Jack's refusal to accompany him. Jack had not been attracted by the Kakamega find, and evidently his hunch had been sound, for he had found gold himself, here in the N'jiri.

Jeff took from his pocket the letter his brother had sent him, and re-read it carefully. Jack stated that he had discovered alluvial gold, but in a dry spot where it could be washed only in the rainy season. He said it was rich, and he should know. 'I'm off to see if I can locate the reef,' the letter ended. 'We can do little till the rains break, but then we will wash out a fortune. I have made a plan

of the strike and there is no doubt of our being able to find it again.'

Jeff wondered what had happened to that plan. He had made enquiries in Nairobi without learning of anyone to whom his brother had entrusted papers. Abdi had handed over everything found on the body and there was nothing to throw light upon the situation of the strike. It must be in this part, or what was Jack doing wandering about here?

Senenge, the Masai, might have helped, but he had disappeared. The District Official, who had driven eighty miles and walked ten to view the scene of the fatality, had questioned Senenge at the time, but did not know what had happened to him since. The gold was lost; it had been a chance find, and now might rest undiscovered for centuries. However, Jeff did not worry about that; his grief swamped all other considerations. It did not seem right that an experienced hunter like Jack should be killed by the unprovoked attack of a beast and the beast get clear away. Someone ought to even things up with the old cattle-thief they called Mubi. Jeff conceived this to be his duty. It was the main reason why he had assembled a safari and journeyed out here into the N'jiri country, for more sentimental reasons were little likely to actuate him. No good was to be got from visiting this grave on the lonely veld; but it would be a tribute to Jack's memory, and the reputation of a great hunter, to track down and slay his victorious enemy.

Jeff, who had lived so long with the beasts that he had come to endow them with human attributes, accepted the blood-feud: he could not rest content while his brother's murderer roamed the veld exulting in the recollection of his victory. He solemnly addressed the insensible remains.

'Don't worry, old chap ; I'll get him, if he's anywhere in this district. I'll nail his mask to that tree to mark your resting place.'

With blurred eyes, which he chose to attribute to the stinging fumes of the shag, he picked his way back to the pool and the camp which had grown up beside it.

It was characteristic of the man that he now concentrated all his faculties on the practical work of shooting the lion. That was what he had come for, and the sooner it was done the sooner he could get away and proceed to relegate his sorrow to the fastnesses of memory. Half an hour of daylight remained. The birds and beasts were now active, seeking their last drink of the day. The cries of partridges and spurfowl were continuous in the bushes about the hollow where pool and camp lay ; the long faces of hartebeeste and gnu rose above the skyline, looking down at the water they dare not approach.

Abdi had been busy about the margin of the pool and had found the spoor of lion, though whether of the beast they sought he could not say. Jeff called to him a pair of Wakamba porters and led the way up on to the veld. It stretched clear and flat in the evening light, backed by the grim circle of mountains : Donyo Erok, N'dapduk, Meru, and the glorious snows of Kibo to the East. Jeff was insensible to the beauty of the scene, his mind was intent on slaughter, like any one of the predatory beasts that frequented this spot.

As he expected, the black-and-white stripes of a troop of zebra showed up plainly four hundred yards away. They were moving restlessly about, snuffing the tainted wind, longing to quench their thirst in the hollow.

They did not run as the man advanced : firearms were new in their experience. Jeff selected a fat stallion and

dropped it with a shot clean through the shoulders. The others galloped a little way and then turned to bark anxious warnings at their comrade who, apparently, had lain down at the approach of these noisy bipeds.

'Cover the carcass with thorns,' Jeff told his boys. 'We'll see if the lion finds it to-night.' The bushes would keep hyenas and vultures from the meat, but royalty would pull them aside and dine in comfort.

Jeff stared round at the darkening veld, dotted with small herds of game of many species. One of these black masses, a mile away, might be buffaloes, but keener scrutiny showed them to be cattle. Presently the herdsman became visible, standing beside a thorn tree. Jeff made for him, with Abdi in attendance.

As they advanced, the sparse grey grass yielded up a plenitude of smaller creatures; duiker, steenbok, a pair of jackals, and a serval rose out of concealment to scamper away. The whole place was thronged with animals, and Jeff wondered dully why a lion should attack man while so many beasts invited its attention. That was the way of it: you never knew what animals were going to do—perhaps Mubi was working off an old grudge against the human species.

The cattle-herd was an old man, dressed in a red-and-white goatskin, carrying nothing but a narrow spear. 'Sobai!' Jeff greeted him, and received the answer, 'Ebai!' as was proper. The white man was fluent with Masai, he asked about grass and cattle and told the news of the districts he had passed. The herd was incurious in a well-bred fashion, but Jeff enlightened him as to his doings. He was encamped at the Pool of the Lizards, and was prospecting and hunting.

'Men say there is a bad beast about here,' he ventured. El Morua jerked his head in assent. 'Mubi, the lion, has

eaten men. He it was who killed the white man whom they buried in that grove on the skyline.'

'Where does he drink?' said Jeff shortly.

'Here, and there. He hunts wide, for he is the strongest lion and all fear him. Often he is at the pool where you camp. You may know him by his lame foot which my son gave him with the spear.'

El Morua knew Senenge. 'He is not often here, for he lives at the Coast with the Mission Fathers. Perhaps he has gone back there. These young men who go to the white men's towns are contemptuous of the ways of their ancestors.'

Jeff returned to camp. He had learned things to ponder over. Mubi was addicted to man-eating: his attack upon the white man had been caused by a predilection for human flesh. Senenge was no raw savage, but a sophisticated mission-boy masquerading in a blanket as his kind so often did. They revisited their homes for a period and lapsed into old habits, putting off and on the habiliments of civilisation at will. It was strange that the District Commissioner had not discovered the man's true identity.

Jeff slept soundly, but, like all men accustomed to danger, he awoke periodically in the night and then he heard the yells of baffled hyenas and the growl of a lion up at the kill. In the morning he was up before dawn, while the cook was going sleepily about the making of tea. After a revivifying cup, he took Abdi and another and began the stalk up to the kill from the leeward side.

The first grey light was stealing over the veld, revealing a multitude of creatures that had grazed all about the pool in the darkness. Half a dozen hyenas were tearing at the remains of the zebra, but though Jeff spent ten minutes peering into the shadows beneath thorn bushes he could see no couchant lion.

The men approached and drove the scavengers away. The kill had been dragged on to a clear piece of sandy ground. The disjointed legs stuck up at incongruous angles, most of the meat had been pulled from the bones, and the hide lay in flaps about it. Like terriers on a scent, the natives quartered the ground. The spoor of a big lion showed leading towards some distant kopjes.

'Good,' said Jeff. 'He will lie up there, and there I shall find him.'

After breakfast he started, alone, for it was his whim to settle accounts with his brother's slayer single-handed. There seemed little doubt that it was Mubi's trail he followed, for the Masai had said this was the only big lion in the district. At this dry season the plains were almost bare of grass, there was no cover for a sleepy beast except among the rocks and gullies of the kopjes, and Jeff felt confident of discovering Mubi's lair. The spoor was soon lost, but he made straight for the rugged hills five miles away.

By now the sun was up and the plain shrouded in its veil of grey-green vapour. Every object was distorted and unreal, animals appeared gigantic, wandering bustards seemed huge as ostriches, and ostriches like prehistoric monsters. The stripes on the zebra waved and undulated; the bulks of giraffe increased and dwindled in the mirage. The beds of dried swamps were now deposits of white encrusted soda and the eyes shrank from the glare. Afar off, the surrounding mountains loomed vague in the mist, and the air felt hot as the breath of an oven.

Over the hunter's mind stole a sense of foreboding. His resolve did not falter, but he had no relish for the work ahead. It occurred to him that he, who had faced so many dangerous beasts without qualms, was afraid of this adventure. The uncanny influence of the place had affected him :

despite all this life around him it was a dead, unreal country, the terrain of a nightmare.

The morning breeze had dropped, there was a flat calm, and it mattered not from which direction he approached the kopjes. They reared up close before him, half a dozen conical hills perhaps three hundred feet high, divided by steep ravines in which grew dense masses of bush. Tall grass, burnt yellow by months of drought, clothed their slopes, and it looked as if some giant had taken handfuls of great granite rocks and cast them haphazard into the welter of vegetation.

Jeff scouted along the base of the hills, looking for tracks. He need examine only the game-paths, for no beast would elect to travel through that tangled grass. At the end of an hour the patient search was rewarded by the discovery of plain lion-spoor on a sandy trail which led into one of the gullies between the hills.

As Jeff proceeded, his way grew steeper and rougher until he walked, slowly and cautiously, between boulders big as haystacks, smooth-polished by water. It was apparent that in heavy rain this defile was a swift river. Deeper into the hills dense masses of bush came down on either side, leaving the narrow strip of the water-course bare and white, like a scar upon a furry hide. Shingle and sand was underfoot, tracking was impossible, but Jeff was convinced the lion had preceded him.

He came suddenly to a chasm. There was a great hole, fifty yards long, in the floor of the donga; its sides were sheer cliffs of sandstone, twice the height of a man. At the far end the rock was hollowed as by a cataract. Before Jeff's feet the boulders descended in a series of enormous steps.

His gaze swept the bottom of this amphitheatre. It was

an uneven pavement of rock, strewn with loose sand. In the walls of it were numerous caverns eaten out by the floods, safe refuge for the beast he sought. The only way down was at this end, where great swelling boulders made platforms to which an agile man could leap. On one of these boulders was loose sand which might have been left by a big splay paw.

It was a ten-foot jump up and a lion could manage it easily enough ; but a man must climb, and Jeff saw no holds for feet or hands. Once down, he would never get back. But there were ways. He began to unbuckle the sling of his rifle. This, lengthened with his belt, he would attach to a root and leave hanging down the rock so that he could draw himself up by it.

Then occurred the accident he had been expecting since that warning premonition had taken hold of him ; the rifle slipped from his hands and plunged down, muzzle foremost, between two immense boulders fifteen feet below. Jeff could see the butt, deep in a crevice where it would be difficult to reach. To make matters worse, in his efforts to save the rifle he had dropped the sling, which now lay on the floor of the gulf.

That settled it : he must go down, trusting to luck to get back again. Measuring the distance, he leapt skilfully to the lower boulder. His moccasins held firm on the rough surface ; a second leap completed the descent.

At once he turned to the business of recovering his rifle. But his efforts were futile, the crevice into which it had fallen was too deep for him to do more than scrape the butt-plate with outstretched fingers. Here was a nice situation ; he was unarmed in Mubi's lair !

Jeff was rueful but not unduly perturbed. He was too conversant with the behaviour of lions, had been in too

many scrapes, to lose his head. Staring round the donga, he could see several places which might shelter the lion, but no sign of the beast. Still, he had better get out of the place as quickly as possible, and, since he could not climb back by the way he had come, he must explore. On silent feet he traversed the length of the depression, careful to avoid observation from an occupant of one of the grottoes in the banks.

Behind a ledge near the chute by which the water entered he came suddenly on the skeleton of a man. The bones lay picked clean by vultures and ants, but unbroken, for hyenas could not reach this spot. A Masai spear lay near, and a knotted blanket was still looped about the arm-bones. There was the usual snuff horn, and a hide belt with goatskin pouch attached. Some wretched native had met his death in this natural trap, and most probably the lion was the culprit.

Jeff stared round uneasily. The donga was silent in the veiled glare of a midday sun; in the trees on the banks birds were the only things that moved. The black openings of half a dozen caves stared at him like unwinking eyes. He felt sure that in one of those caves the lion lay sleeping.

He picked up the spear and hooked the belt towards him. The pouch contained a few coins, a piece of wire, a sharpening stone, and a folded paper. This last was a plan of the district in Jack Heron's writing. The Pool of the Lizards was named, these kopjes were indicated, and a track, which could be none other than the one Jeff had followed, was clearly marked. A footnote said: 'Follow up the donga till you strike it.'

There could be no doubt what the seeker was advised to strike; somewhere along this water-course lay Jack Heron's deposit of alluvial gold. Jeff knew he had found the missing

Senenge. The mission-boy had been through his master's pockets, discovered the map, and realised its portent. He had tried to find the gold, and Mubi had killed and eaten him. The mystery was solved, but now it looked as if Mubi might kill and eat the solver.

Carrying the belt and spear, Jeff padded round the walls of his prison, vainly seeking a way of escape. At no point could the walls be scaled. He discovered more bones, of a baboon this time, and pug-marks leading to one of the caves. Mubi was there, and it could only be a matter of time before he awoke and came out to do battle with the intruder.

Jeff fastened the piece of wire to the belt and set himself patiently to fish in the crevice for his rifle. His object was to introduce his improvised hook through the trigger-guard, but he could not see his way and at the end of an hour was still unsuccessful. This waiting was intolerable. There was going to be a desperate fight in this arena, and the sooner it began the better. Jeff felt that if he had to endure the nerve-strain he would be an hysterical wreck by the time the moment for action arrived. If he could kill Mubi he knew exactly how to get out of the donga. Really the lion was his only hope of escape and he ought to try conclusions with it at once.

Resolutely, he walked to the entrance of the cave and stood there cogitating. Then he went to Senenge's body and got the blanket, which he spread out on the ground. It was too old and flimsy to make into a rope, but he had another use for it. Carefully he knotted stones into the corners. Jeff had read of Caligula's games in the Colosseum; he was going to try his luck as a gladiator.

At the mouth of the cave he stood and shouted to Mubi to come out. He heard a surprised grunt, followed

by a growling roar of warning, but the lion did not appear.

'Come out and show yourself, you skunk,' shouted the man desperately. 'I'm going to spit you like a lark, you loathsome brute!'

Sullen roars responded to his challenge, but Mubi would not emerge—on the contrary it sounded as if he had retreated deeper into the cave. Never in the lion's adventurous career had the enemy sought him out with such insolence, and it seemed to him that this man must be more terrible than a bull elephant. He was safe in the cave and there he intended to stay.

Jeff, having screwed up his courage to meet the lion's charge, was now furious that it was delayed. He stood at the cave-mouth shaking his spear, reviling the inmate at the top of his voice. The more he threatened the more frightened Mubi became.

'You'll skulk in there until it's dark, and then you'll come out and kill me when I can't see you,' howled the man, almost weeping with rage. 'You rotten coward!'

Suddenly he rushed into the cave, to halt undecided in the abrupt change from brightness to semi-obscurity. He heard the lion growling somewhere at the back and caught a flash of green eyes reflecting the light from the opening. Mubi uttered short coughing roars; the noise was terrifying, reverberating in the confined space.

Jeff retreated into the sunlight. It would be suicidal to encounter that savage beast in the gloom. He went to the farther end of the donga and sat down on a rock to think. There was nothing to do now but wait. At dusk the lion would come out and attempt to kill him, and he rather thought it would succeed. The situation was desperate, and he was helpless as a fly in a spider's web. If he could

kill the lion the beast's hide would make a rope with which he might climb out.

He sat there apathetically, feeling very thirsty and hungry, waiting for something to happen. He was worn out with nerve-strain, and presently he dozed.

The scuttling of a lizard over his foot aroused him. The sun had set behind the kopjes, the hollow was filled with dusk. Jeff fancied he heard a stirring in the cave and his heart began to beat fast. The dreaded moment was at hand.

Then he caught sight of a figure prowling along the bank above. It was a native, and there was something furtive and threatening about his behaviour which restrained the cry on Jeff's lips. His sixth sense was at work again, warning him.

The man peered down into the gulf, and Jeff recognised Abdi, his brother's headman. The Swahili's broad face looked diabolical, his lips were drawn back in the snarl of a killer. Jeff was invisible in the shadows; he remained quiet. There was something very wrong here. Villainy was expressed on the headman's face, if ever Jeff saw it.

Abdi had a strip of rawhide; he made it fast and threw the end down the rocks. Then he jumped into the donga. Jeff crawled behind a boulder and watched him.

The rapid tropical darkness was deepening with every minute; Abdi advanced hesitatingly. Jeff knew the man had followed his trail from camp, and was now searching at random. Had his intentions been honest he would have shouted to his master; Jeff had no doubt the Swahili hoped to catch him off his guard and murder him. The reason was obvious: Abdi had plotted with Senenge to steal Jack Heron's gold; the disappearance of his confederate had puzzled, but not defeated, him.

Jeff hoped that the native would pass his hiding-place and allow him to make a dash for the rope. But Abdi came round the rock and confronted him.

They stood staring at each other. Jeff had his spear drawn back ready to throw, but Abdi held a pistol and it was pointed at the white man's breast.

'Well!' said Jeff quietly. 'What are you waiting for? I suppose you know you'll swing for it.'

Abdi seemed a trifle uncertain. He moistened his thick lips with his tongue. 'You found the gold mine,' he said. 'Where is it? and where is your rifle?'

'There is no gold mine,' Jeff told him. 'I found Senenge, killed and eaten. There is nothing to gain. Don't be a fool; drop that gun, and I'll say no more about it.'

The native's eyes blazed at him. 'Ah! Then you know!' He pushed forward the pistol in an unmistakable gesture. Jeff kicked sand in his face and leapt aside. He felt the wind of the bullet past his head; then he turned and ran, into Mubi's cave. It was the first refuge that offered, and he reasoned that if Abdi passed the portals he could see nothing and would be a good target for the spear.

He expected some demonstration from the lion, but was quite unprepared for the deafening roar which came from outside among the rocks he had just left. It was followed by a scream from Abdi and the double report of a pistol. Jeff understood what had happened. All Mubi's ferocious courage had returned with the coming of night: he had actually been stalking the men as they talked amid the shadows.

Jeff ran out. Along the flat bed of the donga the dark form of Abdi was running wildly, and behind another bounded, uttering blood-curdling growls. In a moment,

it seemed, the two coalesced into a rolling, struggling mass on the pale sand. There were yells and gasps, and a dreadful bubbling snarling noise, as of a dog worrying a sheep.

Jeff sprinted to the rope and hauled himself up. At the top he turned to look back.

The donga was thick with shadows ; he could see nothing of its inmates. But he heard harsh purring and the sounds of a lapping tongue. It was enough to speed him on his way to camp.

It is now a legend that when Jeff Heron discovered the Man-Eater Diggings the shock of it turned his hair white. But the two skeletons in Mubi's old lair told no tales, and Jeff saw no reason to talk about them.

LET ME HAVE BEAUTY.

*Let me have Beauty while I may :
With swift despatch draws in the day,
And in the dark I shall not see
The beauty that encompassed me
While yet I travelled in the light :
And long and drear may be the night.*

*Let me have Beauty for this hour
That I may gird me with its power ;
For only they who through the night
Can carry Beauty's inward light
Shall see the morning break at last,
And know the hours of conflict past.*

NORAH E. LANGTON.

ARABIAN KNIGHTS.

BY HEATHER HAMILTON.

I.

ABDUL THE DAMNED.

ABDUL was his name. It was only in moments of exasperation that we called him The Damned. Usually he was referred to more simply as the Skipper. The official term of 'boat-boy' seemed inappropriate to his mature years.

In appearance, he was the living proof—should one be needed—of the Missing Link. He could not have been five foot in height : his legs were bandy and his arms unnaturally long, a pair of bright boot-button eyes peered out of his wizened face. Shinning up the mast, he was unquestionably anthropoid. And yet his mind was not ape-like : it was, in fact, the mind of a fish. He knew what the fish were doing, and why.

'To-day we will not catch anything,' he would say, 'because the fish are sad. But maybe to-morrow they will be happy, and we will catch many big ones.'

'Why are the fish not happy?' we once dared to ask.

He gazed at us wonderingly. 'Only the fish know that,' he said gently, in the tones of one addressing very small children.

'But how do *you* know when they are not happy?' With determination we pursued the subject.

'Allah is great,' he said, 'I know.'

And there the matter had to rest : conversation with Abdul invariably ended in a cul-de-sac.

It was not only his mind that was fish-like, he was amphibious. As we sailed gently into shallow waters, he would never allow the anchor to be thrown overboard. Divesting himself of his turban (but retaining his only other garment, an indescribably dirty 'Kilt') he would plunge into the sea with the anchor in his arms and swim leisurely under water until he found a suitable resting place for it. Having fixed it firmly in position, he would scramble on board, shake himself dry like a dog, replace the turban, and resume command. Should anything be dropped overboard—a topee caught by the wind, or a pair of glare-glasses slip through the fingers—like a flash the boat would be brought up into the wind, and before anyone could protest, the gallant little Skipper would dive into the shark-infested waters and retrieve the fallen object like a well-trained spaniel.

His seamanship was instinctive and unerring: he could get the last ounce of speed out of our big 48-foot dhow, and yet he never sailed dangerously. When not at the tiller himself, he would squat in the bows, watching every shiver of the sail, feeling every pulse-beat of the boat: darting anxious ape-like glances at the helmsmen, fixing him with a beady reproachful eye for a clumsy manœuvre or inexperienced handling.

Cruising round the harbour, looking for a pitch to anchor on and fish with hand-lines, Abdul would wriggle up the mast, and with far-seeing eyes locate where the fish were plentiful—and very seldom was he wrong. In a stiff breeze, when the boat heeled uncomfortably, he would grip the sides with prehensile hands and feet, and dangle his body over the boiling waters, oblivious of danger or damp discomfort, using every ounce of his negligible weight as ballast.

On the sea, or in it : it was his element. He did not have to think what he should do next, action came spontaneously. The boat was part of him, and the sea and the wind were in his blood. He could feel changes of weather long before they became apparent, and the vagaries of fish were no mystery to him.

On land, he was at a disadvantage. It was in fact only ashore that we had cause to refer to him as Abdul the Damned. He could wrestle with the elements in a small boat, and could match his cunning with the denizens of the deep, but on terra firma the world became too much for him.

'Abdul,' we might say, 'is it a good day for fishing?'

'Yes, Sahib, a very good day!'

'Where, then, should we go?'

'We could go anywhere the Sahib wishes.'

'Yes. But where will be the best place to catch fish?'

'Oh-ho,' a sly twinkle would come into the button-eyes.

'We will not catch fish to-day.'

'Why?'

'Because the fish will not like sardines.'

'Then get some other bait.'

'I have other bait. But they will not like that either.'

'Then you do NOT think it is a good day for fishing?'

'That is as the Sahib wills. It is a beautiful day for fishing.'

'But the fish will not rise?'

'No, Sahib, the fish will not rise. Unless, maybe, some will differ from others.'

It is never easy to get a straight answer to a straight question from an Arab; from Abdul it was impossible. Consumed with a desire to please, the simplest issue would become complicated in his muddled brain. One emerged from conversation with him physically and mentally ex-

hausted, and very rarely any the wiser. Abdul was careful never to give himself away.

While strolling idly along the shore, I had once made a small collection of shells. In my innocence, I showed them to the Skipper. His eyes gleamed. 'I will bring you shells !' he said.

Thereafter, every day he would produce shells for me ; shells of every shape and size, which I had not the heart to refuse, and accepted with over-emphasised gratitude. It was only when he came to the house one morning proudly bearing a sackful of enormous oyster-shells that, in thanking him, I let him understand that I now had all the shells I wanted. Later in the day, the head house-boy told me that Abdul had enquired earnestly of him what I did with the shells.

'Does the Memsahib *eat* them ?' he had asked in a horrified whisper.

'The Memsahib throws them away,' was the brutal but honest answer.

I fancied Abdul eyed me suspiciously for many a long day after that, and sea-shells were never mentioned between us again. Unlike most Arabs, the Skipper had no sense of humour.

But in spite of his nearness to nature, or perhaps because of it, he did not altogether lack a sense of beauty. Coming home at dusk, when 'sunset ran one glorious blood-red,' and the sail flapped idly in the dying breeze, he would produce oars like elongated ping-pong bats, and sitting high in the bows, would row with long slow strokes, crooning a rhythmic ballad, a look of serene beatitude pervading his wizened face. Perhaps it was only because he was homeward bound, and food and sleep awaited him ; but I liked to think that something of the beauty of the moment seeped

through to his unawakened soul, and brought wholesome comfort to his confused, sub-human mind.

II.

DESCENDANT OF THE PROPHET.

Seyid Hussein combined the parts of Holyman and soldier of fortune with easy grace, but it was the latter guise that became him most.

Out of the blue he came to us, a self-invited guest : like a meteor he departed, after one short week, trailing clouds of glory that were to be dispersed, alas, only too soon.

His clean-shaven aquiline features were of an almost æsthetic refinement, and his slender hands were as eloquent as his lustrous eyes : when he talked, he talked with his whole body. Bedouin-like, he was a born orator, and addressed his audience, however small, 'as a public meeting.' One had an overwhelming desire to clap when he paused for breath ; it was, in fact, the only active part one could have played in conversation with him.

I can see him now, sitting cross-legged upon a 'charpoy,' wriggling his bare toes, as the lamplight flickered on his face and cast tall shadows on the wall behind. With flashing eye and expressive gesture, he would wax poetical on war-like themes, regaling us with tales of battle. Daring raids with Lawrence in the North—medieval camel-charges beside Bin Saud in the Central Deserts : if the issues at times became confused, it hardly seemed to matter—it was the manner of the telling that counted.

Jogging up and down, in life-like imitation of camel riding, he would sing us marching songs that always ended in a great shout that raised the roof and set the pi-dogs barking.

He had heard of war in Abyssinia, and had made all haste to Aden, anxious lest he should be too late for it, childishly fearful that he might be 'missing something.' He undertook the arduous trek from the North, fully expecting to find Lawrence playing a lone hand in Abyssinia.

We had difficulty in persuading him that Lawrence was dead. 'Laurens' surely could not die like that . . . he shook his head sorrowfully, emitting low moaning sounds. But in a moment, he was himself again. If there was fighting across the water, then he must be in it—and would the Sahib be able to oblige with a Government passport?

He had all the dramatic instincts of the actor, and at no time were they more skilfully brought into play than when he gave the Call to Prayer. Standing on the roof of our house, his tall figure clad in flowing northern robes, green-turbaned, outlined against a twilit sky he would call the Faithful in a full-throated voice, high-pitched yet sonorous. After the nasal whine of the Southern Arab, it came as a revelation, and it held one spellbound.

We would hurry home from our afternoon's activities in order not to miss it, and our 'Call to Prayer Parties' became a much-sought-after entertainment.

He was, of course, Too Good to be True. Here, at last, was the story-book Arab: the high-minded chivalrous Bedouin, the romantic hero of the Hollywood film. Possessing every 'glamorous' attribute, he would have made a fortune overnight in Los Angeles.

But living in Arabia tends to make one sceptical about the Romantic Bedouin. We were convinced that, given time, he would inevitably make the one false step that would proclaim him to be a true son of the desert—of the earth, earthy.

I was glad, however, that we did not discover his feet

of clay until some time after he had left us. Many a long evening we had spent with him, conscientiously sipping soda-water, so as not to offend a Descendant of the Prophet by the proximity of alcohol. After his departure, I had cause to review our 'cellar,' and remarked with some surprise on the rapidity with which our store of beer had diminished. Only then did the head house-boy reveal how, after he had bidden us good-night, Seyid Hussein would call for a pint of beer as a nightcap. . . .

We parted friends, in spite of the delicate matter of the passport, which at one time threatened to cause a slight strain in our otherwise serene relationship. That the coveted Government pass had been refused would, we were given to understand, cause no serious inconvenience to our distinguished guest. He had other strings to his bow : and if an unenlightened Government saw fit to be obstructive, why should such a small matter come between friends ?

He promised to visit us again, but he never came. Nor was this surprising, when we learnt later that he had been gaoled by the Italians for a laudable, but alas, unsuccessful, attempt to gun-run for both sides.

Disillusionment is always painful, even when foreseen, and I still like to think of Seyid Hussein as I knew him : the picturesque embodiment of all that is best in this strange land of Arabia, where nothing is as it seems, but is almost always a little worse.

I have heard him referred to as a Verminous Crook—there was ample proof that he was both—but I have rarely had the pleasure of entertaining a more delightful guest.

BY THE WAY.

ONE of the great difficulties of any monthly commentator has been, as it has been necessary to remark before, that for many months past it has been quite impossible to forecast what the days that lay ahead might bring : a comment written a fortnight or more before it was given in print to readers might then be found to be nonsense. It may still be impossible to forecast the future, but uncertainty in one respect has now been ended. Even as the time drew near when it was imperative to sit down and write these notes, if they were not to be late for the October issue, so Herr Hitler has resolved the uncertainty and made it certain that when these notes appear they will be notes not of 'the war of nerves' but of the war the launching of which by an insensate megalomaniac will—beyond all question—go down to posterity as the greatest of all human crimes. Against the success of that, come what may—and I write these words on the eve of September 1—this nation stands and will stand four-square, unified as never in all our history, and in the righteousness of our cause invincible.

* * *

During the most anxious days that preceded Herr Hitler's crime I was—like many another—in widely differing parts of England, in the peace of the West Country, in the hum of an industrial centre, amidst the lathes and jigs of a modern factory, in that astonishing city, London, so strong and so calm, and by the ceaseless activity of the sea. In all places

alike but one feeling prevailed :— in August, 1914, I wrote two lines of a prayer,

*'Guard us and guide us through the war
We did not seek and could not shun.'*

How similar and yet dissimilar was August, 1939, resolve coupled with a passionate sense of the waste and folly that might be, and now has been. Coming away from a loved spot in one of those hours when still the wings of Death were unstretched, I wrote the following lines which may perhaps, express what countless people, not in this land alone, then felt in differing ways :—

*I turned away : the silvered moorland pool
Lying below me like a maid at prayer
Vanished behind the rock ; the earth went still
Awed into anguish by the voracious doom
That lowers over all. Our lives are stabbed
With ignorance—what misery may be borne
On seas of blood and bitter ghastliness
Before the pool is given to my eyes
In some new year beyond the millioned death ?
What searing may be reckoned to mankind ?
What certainty of any loved return
When all is doubt and like a leper's flesh
Rots at the sense's touch ? Long have I loved
This pool of the earth's wild bounty, this small gem
Laid on the bosom of the breathing moor
Beneath the granite's strength—now it is pain
As all things are that tell of quietness,
That have within their silence a great calm
Resistant to these days of turbulent greed,
These crimes of man's ambition, this old scourge
Of domination's deadly masquerade.*

*Behind the rock, O God, behind the rock,
 Behind the splendour of the soaring might
 Of Your eternity, assailed yet vast,
 Let us strained mortals shelter : let us send
 Our stern remembrance backward in resolve ;
 To all the love and the beauty we have known,
 The gifts and gladness of our harboured life,
 Let us now cling ; above the banks of clouds,
 The creeping menace of a wasted world
 That so engulfs our spirit, let us climb
 With iron courage till we stand once more
 Bleeding, unbroken, by the cross of peace !*

* * *

The waste and the folly—the one made inevitable by the other. It seems quite incredible that any set of men with the memories and the result of 1914–18 behind them should repeat almost identically the same mistakes and, even beyond that, use language of exactly the same calibre. It used to be said of the Bourbons that they ‘remembered nothing and forgot nothing’ ; let us no longer be so unfair as to continue to say this now that so much clearer an example has been provided by the Nazis. German rulers seem all of a pattern and these poor rhodomontading tyrants are today making a close copy of their former master, the Kaiser. In 1914 it was ‘contemptible little army,’ in 1939 it is ‘ridiculous little nation.’ How silly, how utterly lacking not merely in chivalry but in sense !

* * *

Other words recur : most of us believed—hoped, at all events—that certain phrases belonged to the limbo of the unhappy years of the former German War, and now again

we have them reborn to a new generation. Words like 'duration,' for example : no doubt, we shall soon recognize again the old jokes current on the former Western front. In such things lie a great depth : we are the same people, and our spirit and purpose, now as then, will endure to the end.

* * *

Perhaps the best of the new jokes, so far, is the saying that the only thing of which Hitler can give his nation a second helping is war. And so onwards, with a quiet determination never equalled even in our long story.

* * *

Autobiography is one of the forms of literary output which is the least likely to be affected adversely by abnormal conditions ; the more abnormal they are, the more interesting, to the participant at any rate, is the life likely to be. And undoubtedly in the days to come there will be a spate of autobiographical works of varying value and importance concerning the times of stress and strain which for so long have been the usual for us and all our contemporaries. Mr. James Bridie, however, has not had to rely upon abnormalities for the creation of a very gay and continually interesting autobiography : he came to the conclusion that he had lived long enough to justify some account of himself, in this as in many other ways being a good deal more modest than many—autobiographies of authors in their twenties are plentiful and of those in their 'teens not unknown, and Mr. Bridie is in his fifties. *One Way of Living* (Constable, 8s. 6d. n.) is a good way, as revealed by Mr. Bridie : it is written in a quietly humorous, half depreciatory vein divided into periods of five years. The following adjuration is typical :— ' in my first 25 years appreciation, tolerance and

loyalty kept breaking out in spite of me. I may have been repulsive, but I was not bad. Please remember this." Or this :—"The average boy writes letters either to please, to irritate, to fulfil a duty or to impress. He seldom uses them to express his mind. . . . I am persuaded I was a better man than these sheets revealed.' He need neither worry nor apologize : doctor and playwright, boy, man and autobiographer, he wins his readers' attention at once and easily gains and retains their affection.

* * *

Cast in a different vein, well suited to the stern and difficult times in which we live, are those of whom a companion pair of books tell. Every boy worth his salt was brought up on Fitchett's *Deeds That Won the Empire*. But Empires take more than winning, especially in these days, and it was a valuable thought of the publishers to start a new series happily named *Deeds that Held the Empire* (Murray, 7s. 6d. n. each). Major E. W. Sheppard deals with the deeds *By Land*, A. D. Divine *At Sea* ; neither really needs a sponsor nor do the stirring deeds that each relates, but the one has a foreword by Field-Marshal Lord Birdwood and the other by Admiral of the Fleet Sir Roger Keyes—thus are Anzac and Zeebrugge linked as is most fitting. Both volumes are thoroughly well done and the deeds which only need correct and graphic presentation receive it and stand forth thrillingly. No better present for any schoolboy—or girl—could well be found ; and, for that matter, if it did matter, which it does not, no more complete rebuttal of the silly and calumnious propaganda of Dr. Goebbels and people of his uncomfortable kidney. *By Land*, it may be added, begins with 'Hastings and the Pindari War' in 1813 and concludes with 'Lawrence and the Arab Revolt' ; *At Sea* begins with

'The Bombardment of Algiers' in 1816 and concludes with 'The Turn of the Wheel', the cleaning up of piracy by submarine in 1927. Thus are the men of to-day seen to be of no less stature and valour than their forefathers—and already the enemy knows it.

* * *

Sir Dudley Ryder, who died in 1756 on the day that his patent as a baron was signed, was Chief Justice in the Court of King's Bench and as such a man of distinction in his day, but it will not be as Chief Justice or as Attorney-General that he is likely to be remembered but as a diarist who is not perhaps to be compared to the great diarists but still was sufficiently of that calibre to break his own rule: he speaks of 'the folly of writing lives in such a manner as that (namely Mr. Henry's Life) is, by exposing all the little trifling transactions and private affairs of a man's life. It did a great deal of injury to his character'—it may do so, but by such revelation alone does a man survive. Here in *The Diary of Dudley Ryder* (Methuen, 16s. n.) for the two years 1715-1716, readers have him resuscitated by William Matthews in all his trifling transactions and private affairs—and good company he is, whether congratulating himself on his courage in taking a cold bath or recording 'That is the great unhappiness of my temper, that I am too apt in the affair of love and women to construe everything done by her I love to my prejudice' or forcing his way with 'a good impudent face' into Westminster to hear Lord Wintoun's trial. A book of this kind, well edited, takes one back out of the present into the foibles, activities and scenes of the past as no other form does and is both enjoyable and instructive.

G.

THE 'CORNHILL' COMPETITION.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 192.

PRIZES of books to the value of £1, from John Murray's catalogue, are offered to the two solvers whose letters are first opened. Answers, containing the coupon from page v, must be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, 50 Albemarle Street, W.1, and must reach him by 31st October.

'—O tears ! O grief ! hung at a ———
To which pale Atropos had set her knife ;'

1. 'There are two births, the one when light
—— strikes the new awaken'd sense ;'
2. '—— like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow'
3. 'Your voice, when you wish the snowdrop back,
Though it stay in my soul for —— !'
4. 'The distance takes a lovelier hue
And drown'd in yonder living ——
The lark becomes a sightless song.'
5. 'Not Jove himselfe, when he a Swan would be,
For love of —— whiter did appeare ;'
6. 'Instead of common showers,
Thy wings shall be —— by me,
And all beset with flowers.'

Answer to Acrostic 190, August number : 'Can utterly abolish or destroy !' (Wordsworth : 'Ode'). 1. AbroaD (Keats : 'Fancy'). 2. BE (Thomas Hood : 'Silence'). 3. OurselfeS (Whittier : 'Vesta'). 4. LefT (Elizabeth Browning : 'Consolation'). 5. InheritoR(s) (Shakespeare : 'Sonnet'). 6. SO (Emerson : 'Bacchus'). 7. Heavy (Coleridge : 'Ancient Mariner').

The first correct answers opened were sent by Miss Ruth Kelly, 10 Cherryvalley Park, Belfast, and Mrs. Morton, Charnwood House, Alexandra Park, Nottingham, who are invited to choose books as mentioned above. N.B.—Sources need not be given.

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